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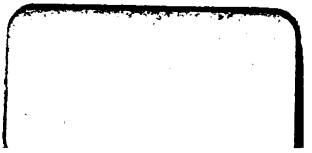

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DE VERE;

OR,

THE MAN OF INDEPENDENCE.

THE PROPERTY OF THE NEW-YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY

CHAPTER I.

EXILE.

And sighed my English breath in foreign clouds,
Eating the bitter bread of banishment;
Whilst you have fed upon my Signories,
Dispark'd my parks, and fell'd my forest woods,
Raz'd out my impress, leaving me no sign,
Save men's opinions and my living blood,
To show the world I am a gentleman.

SHAKSPEARE.

HAD the intercourse between France and England been as easy and as frequent in the time of Elizabeth as it is now, Shakspeare would probably have revelled in the description of an embarkation; and among the numerous touches we feed upon in his account of human life, we should possibly have to dwell upon the various emotions of that multitude of characters who hurry to the shores of their country in order to leave it. The boat of Charon itself could hardly exhibit a more motley picture of our wayward nature; it could hardly contain more fears or regrets, or hopes, tender or bitter recollections, or joyful expectations, curiosity, or moroseness, or avarice, or the spirit of intrigue, love, honour, or ambition, than the boat that wafts the restless Englishman to the opposite shore.

With this in view, we will not merely say a misanthrope, but a rational observer of mankind, would

do well, for a while, to take a position on the pier of any port of embarkation. The fancy of a Jaques would run riot in it.

But we must not stop to inquire into the thousand exhibitions of the human character which Dover afforded to our travellers, as they seated themselves in the packet. Here an emaciated devotee of the world, in whose service he had destroyed his health, was flying to the sweet south for strength to enjoy it a little longer; there his heir, accompanying him, and secretly wondering (we will not say wishing the contrary) whether he would ever come back. Here an embezzler, with the portfolio of his master, fearing an officer in every man that looked at him. There a wife, in tears and agitation, and already repentant, at having fled from a husband with a lover not to be compared to him. Now they saw a young heir, big with all hope, the world at his feet; and now a man driven from society for infamy, envying the commonest sailor boy that scrubbed dirt from the deck. Here was a faded *ennuyé*, flying from himself in London, to be still more tired of the same person in Paris; there a whole family going to live cheap *en Province*, and obtain a good accent for their younger children. A jilted lover sighed most bitterly in the forecastle, to which he had retired, with eyes fixed upon the water, though now and then looking at the road up the cliff, as leading to the only thing in the world that could interest him, with all her faults. On the other hand, in solemn state, and most oracular visage, sat an Envoy and his Secretary, just appointed to their first mission at an inferior German court, on which they thought the fate of Europe depended. Two or three Frenchmen sat by themselves, congratulating each other on having escaped from the *pays brutale et féroce*, where the ladies never said a word, and no one could make a good soup.

It were endless to recount the impressions which these and other characters made upon Wentworth and De Vere; who, at the same time, were themselves as open as the rest to the investigation of a philoso-

pher. They certainly participated with the most restless of their companions in their desire to leave England; and it was not till they were full mid-chan-el, and under the impulse of a favourable breeze, at they seemed to breathe a freer air.

How different from that beautiful, that unfortunate, d then innocent queen, who, crossing this very nnel, fixed her eyes till night on the shores she left, and even ordered her bed to be spread on deck, that she might behold them once more in dawn, if the dawn still gave them to her view. one of the motley crew of the packet, and cer-not De Vere or Wentworth, were actuated by ling towards England.

England was their country, and loved by them s it deserved to be loved. It contained all st fondly prized, though it also contained occasioned their disgust. At that moment redominated; witness the feeling of Went-en he was recently so impressed by the former activity. Indeed there is no say-extremity of prejudice the human heart under the influence of great excitement, plated by the habit of self-control.

complaisance to the youth and health of Wentworth offered to stay some time at not more to his pleasure than his sur-re declared against it.

or for its luxury," said he; "and as for man of quality, she is not to my taste—

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"Yet it is full of brilliancy," said his companion; "of thinking, and even of science and learning."

"It is on that very account I dislike it: I doubt the thinking; and though I might admire brilliancy for a time, and wit too, if it do not make them bold, I wish not to be dazzled where soothing and softness are the peculiar fascinations of the sex. It is to these, and these alone, that we fly for that refuge which we cannot find in ourselves."

"You hate then science and learning in petticoats?"

"Why, if I wanted them for their own sakes, I could get them better from the men; if for the sake of any superior attraction, when possessed by females, I could as soon think a coat and waistcoat superiorly graceful from being worn by a woman instead of myself."

"This may be true," said Wentworth; "but if not at Paris, where then is your standard of excellence?"

"Look at home;" replied De Vere, "for how different are the gentle beings we have quitted, where the most excellent sense and the best understandings are accompanied by a retiring grace that never suffers them to overstep their modesty of character."

"Upon my word," said Wentworth, "the English ladies, at least, are much obliged to you; yet, even in England, we have Mrs. Montague."

"And even Mrs. Montague," replied De Vere, "I could love more, if she would lay down her learning. Beauty, elegance, goodness, all conspire in her to fascinate me; but make her a school-mistress, and the fascination is gone."

"You would not then marry a scholar, though so much more fitted to be your companion? You would prefer one who would talk of silks and laces?"

"If the laces set off her beauty while talking, I should have no objection," answered De Vere; "provided she could also talk of her heart, and that heart was mine. But the sphere of woman's companionship is not so contracted. The virtues, the graces, the accomplishments, that delight and purify us at the same time,—these are all hers; and should I ever

be able to marry, these I should seek; but, as to a downright woman of letters, nothing terrifies me so much: I would as soon marry my dictionary."

Wentworth laughed, and the Geoffrins, l'Espinasses, and Du Deffands were given up.

They accordingly left Paris in a few days, and took the road to Toulouse; but stopped in the village of Villette, at some leagues distance from Paris.

There were interests in that village which were enthusiastically felt by Wentworth, and, young as he was, even by De Vere. With ten thousand faults, the character, life, and mind of Bolingbroke, were favourite and frequent topics of discourse with both the travellers, and Bolingbroke had passed several years of his exile at a secluded chateau in this neighbourhood. The fineness of mind, the high-breeding, and brilliant talents of this statesman; the vicissitudes of his life, his love of letters, his eloquence and philosophic *imagination*, (we dare not call it genuine philosophy) could not be obliterated by those bursts of passion, (amounting to almost phrenzy) which plunged him, now into the grossest debauchery, now into violence, nothing short of treason. He had all the vehemence, but not the virtues of the gallant Essex; and this vehemence, like that of Essex, though often generous, was so ill directed, as to prove his ruin. With parts, which left all other men behind, he was a tissue of incongruity; ever philosophizing, ever sinning against philosophy; praising exile, yet incensed at being exiled; affecting to despise the world, yet a martyr to its ambitions; smitten with the calmness of retreat, yet bursting with party rage. Oh! who can describe him, streaming "like a meteor on the troubled air," beyond all rule of calculation; admired, and contemned, blamed, hated, and loved.

As he was the very child of political ambition, and while in office, the model of official merit, no wonder that he had been the peculiar study of a successor like Wentworth, as little that all things belonging to him should have wound about and augmented the interest with which he was regarded, both by Went-

worth and De Vere. Wentworth, indeed, chiefly viewed him as a minister; De Vere as a problem in human nature; both, as a man whose every point of history was a matter worthy of inquiry. Can we be surprised, that their hearts beat high on their approach to what had been his dwelling? It was, in fact, the concerted object of their pilgrimage when they quitted Paris.

The shrine, however, had long been abandoned, and now lay, void of an inhabitant, in a most neglected state. At the end of the village, or rather of a long street, old and massive gates, full ten feet high, opened to what had been the domain. The ancient arms of the family of whom Bolingbroke bought it, cast in lead, still looked respectably, though the rust of time had defaced all other appendages. Nettles, and close matted weeds, obscured what could be seen of the immediate interior, and entirely hid the borders of a straight-lined canal, so seldom visited as to be the abode of wild ducks. The gates, however, were locked, and all approach forbidden, till a tall thin Frenchman, whose few grey locks were pinned in a bag, and surmounted by a cocked hat (not over new, but decorated with a red cockade), advanced with somewhat of a military air, and, showing a huge key (a proof of his authority), offered his services in showing the house.

He had on a thread-bare coat, of a saffron colour, with large sleeves and many buttons, and a waistcoat of the same, with flaps down to the knees; and he did the honours of the deserted mansion with no mean grace. To an English matter-of-fact Cicisbeo, he was a Hyperion to a satyr.

"Messieurs, veuillent voir la maison de leur Lor Boolingbrooke," said the Frenchman, who, from the circumstance of being simply entrusted with the key, called himself, and was called by others, Monsieur l'Intendant.

"Yes!" answered Wentworth; "and we should be glad to know if there is any person in the place who can remember him."

"C'est moi, qui est cette heureuse personne," replied the Frenchman, unlocking the gate.

The travellers rejoiced at the event, and would have immediately begun a string of questions on the subject, when a covey of red legged partridges, well fledged, flew up, or rather ran from under their feet; several browzing rabbits scudded to their burrows, and more than one adder crept hissing to his hole.

"Ah! les coquins," said the steward, "they have not been disturbed for a long time."

Both the gentlemen hurried towards the house.

'Twas in a dilapidated state, from having scarcely had a tenant from the time Bolingbroke had left it. The immense stone steps, and well carved balustrades that led up to the door, were many of them broken in halves; the door itself, though of huge oak, had lost some of its pannels; and the thick, but decayed rails and small panes of the windows, which composed the extensive and once handsome front, did any thing but keep out the weather. Over the door, however, was seen, in large letters, the inscription of

UBI BENE, IBI PATRIA.

Wentworth was much struck, and paused a minute or two on the threshold, occupied with this sentiment which evidently gave a turn to his thoughts. Then, expressing his wonder at the neglect into which the place had fallen, the steward could only shrug up his shoulders, but pointed to a marble paved anti-room which led, he said, to the apartment of Milor.

"Every thing," observed Wentworth, "that makes us familiar with such a man, is full of interest;" and he hurried into this apartment.

There was a saloon, a bed-room, and a closet with empty bookshelves, the last commanding a beautiful view of a wild and retired forest, from windows full a dozen feet from their high projecting seats to the ceiling. In this room was the only chair to be found in the house, and on the back of it had been painted though now much faded, a viscount's coronet and a falcon, the St. John crest, together with the philosophical motto,

"Nec quarere nec spernere honorem;"

which the new viscount assumed, he says, when he was weak enough to enlist a second time under Oxford, but which he thought he most proved in the days of his exile. There was also a reading-desk, which their conductor said had belonged to him, and on which the same crest and motto were painted.

"True to his theories, at least," observed Wentworth, "he was attentive, even to minuteness, in blazoning his fancied philosophy, wherever he could find room for it."

"Had his practice proved him sincere," said De Vere, "I should not blame him. I am no enemy to the custom of thus feeding one's imagination, where the end is good."

Here they were interrupted by the guide, who assured them, he said, upon authority which he thought unquestionable, that *milor* was *le plus grand philosophe et ministre du monde*, always excepted *monsieur le baron de Montesquieu*.

Then assuming an air of greater importance, and opening the locker of one of the window-seats, he produced a manuscript book, mouldy with age, and in many parts obliterated from damp, but which was evidently a common-place book, and, as it seemed to Wentworth, in Bolingbroke's hand-writing.

"*Le voila!*" cried the intendant, with increased significance, "*C'est son écriture!*"

Both Wentworth and De Vere hurried to examine it, even before they were told by their guide that it was he who had discovered this only relic of the great *milor*, and that he had very honestly informed the steward of the estate of it, who, upon the strength of his having been son to the gardener when Bolingbroke lived there, told him he might keep it.

"I did so," said the old gentleman, "and as English travellers often come here, I have found my account in showing it to them, as I hope," concluded he, with a low bow, "I shall to-day."

The friends were so much absorbed with the manuscript, as scarcely to listen to him, though the book

was merely a collection of passages from different authors bearing upon particular subjects, with a few original sentences of the writer's own, afterwards incorporated with his works. Both gentlemen were particularly struck with the following, which they read with avidity, and which brought home to them many reflections, to which even what De Vere, but particularly Wentworth, had seen of the world of ambition, made them peculiarly alive.

"Similis, a captain of great reputation, under Trajan and Adrian, having obtained leave to retire, passed seven years in his retreat, and then dying ordered this inscription to be put on his tomb: that he had been many years on earth, but that he had lived only seven. If you are wise, your leisure will be as worthily employed, and your retreat will add new lustre to your character. Imitate Thucydides in Thrace, or Xenophon in his little farm at Scillus. In such a retreat you may sit down like one of the inhabitants of Elis, who judged of the Olympic games without taking any part in them. Far from the hurry of the world, and almost an unconcerned spectator of what passes in it, having paid in a public life what you owed to the present age, pay in a private life what you owe to posterity. *Write, as you have lived without passion*, and build your reputation, as you build your happiness, on the foundation of truth.

'Innocuas amo delicias doctamque quietam.'"

Wentworth and De Vere looked at one another on finishing these passages, each moved by the same sentiment.

"To think," at last exclaimed Wentworth, "how differently a man can act and write!"

"And yet," observed De Vere, looking at the landscape from the windows, "may we not suppose him sincere?"

"For the moment, yes!" replied Wentworth, "and though the landscape is, as you say, delightful, I dare say when he sat at this window, he looked oftenest at the road to Paris."

"It is certain," observed De Vere, falling into

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themselves. Abandoned as all appeared to be, there was an air of romance about the place, which added to association, pointed every thing with interest. For it evidently was a spot in which the imagination of a disappointed *ambitieux* had brooded, and endeavoured to console itself in the dignity of retreat.

Both gentlemen were particularly struck with a tablet immediately over the shell of a river-god, whence the fountain broke. On this was inscribed the following emphatic lines, descriptive of Bolingbroke's own sense, at least, of the injustice of his fate, and his philosophy in bearing it.

"Propter fidem adversus Reginam, et partes,
Intemeratè servatam,
Propter operam, in pace generali conciliandâ
Strenue saltem navatam,
Impotentia vesanæ factionis
Solum vertere coactus,
Hic ad aquæ lene caput sacræ,
Injustè exulat,
Dulcè vivit,
H. De B. An." *

On another marble the sentiment seemed pursued in the following:

"Si resipiscat patria, in patriam rediturus;
Si non resipiscat, ubivis melius quam inter
Tales civis futurus,
Hanc villam instauro et exorno:
Hinc, velut ex portu, alienos casus
Et fortunæ ludum insolentem
Cernere suave est.
Hic, mortem nec appetens nec timens
Innocuis deficiis,
Doctâ quiete,
et
Felicis animi immotâ tranquillitate,
Fruiscor.

* By the madness of an outrageous faction
On account of his unstained fidelity to his queen
And his strenuous endeavour to accomplish a general peace,
Having been forced to seek a new country,
Here, at the soft source of this sacred fountain,
Henry of Bolingbroke,
Unjustly banished,
Pleasantly lived.

Hic mihi vivam quod superest aut exilii,
Aut ævi." *

"Charming," exclaimed De Vere, "could we only suppose the sentiment genuine; but I doubt both the immoveable tranquillity, and the happy mind he talks of. 'The lady doth profess too much methinks,' yet there is such charms in the sentiment, such witchery in the notion of a philosophic independence of the world that, self-deluded or not, it is interesting to contemplate these effusions."

"What shall we say," said Wentworth, (pondering over the first inscription) "to the political account of himself? Was he right in flying from trial, or would he not have been safe, or at least consulted his reputation better, had he, like the man he affected to despise,† nobly braved it?"

"Party rage," replied De Vere, "is such a monster, that there is no saying; but I allow, as a man of political courage, however inferior in other respects, the firmness of Lord Oxford will ever place him above Bolingbroke."

"St. John is a sort of hero of yours," said Wentworth.

"A *sort of one*," replied De Vere, "though, Heaven knows, for consistency, manliness, and all that constitutes greatness, he had very little of the hero about him. As an ambitious man, from the violence with which he pushed his great passion, and the envy, ha-

* If his country come to her senses, about to return to her,
If not, any where better than among such a people,
This villa I found, and adorn.
Here in safety as from a harbour,
It is delightful to look at the dangers of others,
And the insolent mockeries of Fortune.
Here
In innocent recreation and learned leisure,
(Neither desiring nor fearing death,)
I enjoy that unmoveable tranquillity
Which springs from a happy mind.
Here during whatever remains to me
Of life or of exile,
I live to myself.

† Oxford.

tred, and malice he bestowed on the chief he himself had chosen, his life can only be useful to show how the greatest talents and energies, may but prove the misery of the possessor. He was for ever affecting to despise titles and ribands, as empty playthings; yet his most desperate quarrel with Harley, was for not getting the garter, like him, and, like him, not being made an earl instead of a viscount. A man with that in him which really makes ambition virtue, would despise this."

"All that is true," said Wentworth, "but then for what do you admire him?"

"For the elegance, as well as activity of his mind; for his eloquence, and perhaps I might say, for what always charms a warm imagination, that very self-deluding spirit of romance, which led him to dream at least of philosophy and happiness wherever he was."

"As he evidently did here," observed Wentworth; "nor can I deny the pleasure which this picture of his mind (whether under self-delusion or not) has given me."

"A better master of human nature than he," observed De Vere, "had perhaps made him believe (and I wonder it was not among these inscriptions) that

> 'All places, that the eye of Heaven visits,
> Are, to a wise man, ports and happy havens.
> Think not the king did banish thee.
> But thou the king.
> Look what thy soul holds dear—imagine it
> To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou com'st:
> Suppose the singing birds, musicians;
> The grass whereon thou tread'st, the presence strowed;
> The flowers, fair ladies; and thy steps, no more
> Than a delightful measure, or a dance:
> For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
> The man that mocks at it, and sets it light.'"

"This is delightful talk," observed Wentworth, "and, as talk, I wonder, with you, that this unaccountable person did not leave it as a memorial of his mind. Perhaps, however, the same master you speak of, taught him to answer himself—

'Oh! who can hold a fire in his hand,
By thinking of the frosty Caucasus?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite,
By bare imagination of a feast.'"

Both the gentlemen here became pensive, and the thought of all these disappointments in the life of his aspiring predecessor, got such possession of Wentworth, that he seemed moody with his reflections. He crossed his arms, read the inscriptions once more, and remunerating Monsieur Nicholas, retired with his friend in silence to his carriage. They then resumed the road to Toulouse.

CHAPTER II.

THE VICISSITUDES OF PARTY.

Men so noble,
However faulty, yet should find respect
For what they have been. SHAKSPEARE.

THE contemplation of the scene they had left, produced an evident effect on the minds of both our travellers. For some miles they were silent, revolving the dazzling instance of self-deception which the late visit had afforded; but revolving also the extraordinary fluctuations in the life of a devotee of ambition, which the fate of this highly gifted minister exhibited. The subject formed the topic of many conversations, even to the very foot of the Pyrenees. In one of them, Wentworth observed, "Had I been Walpole, having restored St. John to his titles and estate, I think I would not have opposed his complete restoration, nor shut him out of the House of Lords."*

"I honour you for the sentiment," returned De Vere; "but Walpole, I suppose, had too much wisdom, as it is called, to be generous."

* He was reinstated in every thing but his seat among the peers, where it was thought he would be too dangerous.

"And yet," observed Wentworth, "generosity, so far from militating against wisdom, even in politics, may be made one of the most powerful, as it surely is one of the most delightful means of governing a state, even through party."

"I rejoice to hear this from you," replied De Vere; "you who have so much experience, and cannot therefore, like us visionary people, be led away by mere theory."

"I am not one of those," returned Wentworth, "who think that all government consists in mystery; that statesmen, to be such, must always be calculating, always spreading nets, never candid, never magnanimous. On the contrary, I see no reason why the high qualities that elevate private life, should not equally govern public conduct; nay, I am convinced that even with a view to mere self-interest, it were better so. In fact, a character for honesty and generosity will do the statesman more good than all the cunning and coldness in the world. Leave these to the Oldcastles and Mowbrays, and your friend Mr. Clayton, who, at present, find their account in it."

"Agreed!" said De Vere, with great warmth, and conceiving higher respect than ever for his companion. "And yet," added he with concern, "how sad is it to think of the lamentable wreck of so many brave and leading spirits as graced the time when this distinguished exile flourished—Harley and Harcourt, Prior and Swift and Atterbury! But, above all, I cannot help feeling a pang for the absolute ruin of that noble house of Ormond, of which so many magnanimous, so many loyal and gallant things are recorded. All of these were thrown down and trodden under foot, without remorse, from the ungenerous selfishness which seems peculiarly to belong to political struggles."

"There is much in what you say," observed Wentworth, (evidently brooding upon the character of his own time) "and in regard to the family of Ormond, I have often sighed over it, and for the same reason as you. I agree with Swift that, in obeying the orders of the queen, which proved so fatal to him, the son of the

high-souled Ossory (who when dead would not have been exchanged by his father for any living son in Europe) thought no more of *treason* against his country, than when he was wounded in her service and the cause of King William. It shocks all justice to think of this wreck. On the other hand, it is mortifying to consider how little comfort this eminent party derived from their own subsequent conduct, or fidelity to one another. In our happy country, where despotism is always talked of, but never exists, a party may lose office, but does not on that account necessarily lose its respectability. It has a resource in its own firmness, its adherence to principle, and the fidelity of its members to one another, which may, if it please, bid defiance to rivals even the most successful. Thank God, there are in Britain no Bastiles, no banishments *à ses terress*; and the sovereign himself often looks wistfully to his opposition, as a protection against his administration."

Wentworth said this proudly; and then clouding again with his reflections, he added, "But I agree with you in your lamentations over the ashes of this extinct but illustrious party—embalmed in our memories by what must ever set it off, and render it an object of our interest—its genius and the band of literary names that belonged to it. Others are known only in the archives of office—these we love in our closets and our libraries. But it is, indeed, lamentable to think how all were broken up, and still more that it was by their own fault. They fell, never to rise again. How does the heart of genius, and kindness, too, beat, when it thinks of the Secretary of State and the ambassador in France, (both the darlings of letters,) writing to one another at the end of an elaborate despatch, as Matt to Henry, or Henry to Matt! How is our hope killed, when we read a few, a very few years afterwards, of the same Henry, writing of the same Matt, (coldly glancing at his poverty (reduced in his age from an ambassador to a fellow of a college,) sneering at his epitaph, written by himself, and speaking even of his death as a mere common occurrence."

Here Wentworth stopped, moved by his feelings.

"I own," said De Vere, "this is one of many things that have disgusted me with political friendships. And yet Bolingbroke had for ever in his mouth, "*Nulla est amicitia nisi inter bonos.*" As if Prior was not *inter bonos*, as well as himself!"

"The fate of Prior," said Wentworth, "is I own a lesson in ambition, to all who plunge into politics upon the strength of literary talents alone, without the aid of birth, wealth, or connections, and without the distinguishing advantage of parliamentary abilities. But even those of the party who had all these, were by some fatality doomed to glitter a little, and then go out for ever. It is hard to think that such a man as Harcourt, illustrious from birth, as well as the great seal, should fall into contempt, and be reviled even by his friends—but more so that Atterbury, whom we so admire as a scholar, and look upon as a martyr to his sincerity in his principles, should also be vilified by the same friends, as wanting in the only qualities which can make a falling party respectable—fidelity. These are sad reflections to the public man, and might really tempt one to fall back upon private life, and dream it away in sweet illusion—often so much more happy than the most successful reality."

This sentiment surprised De Vere. He had sometimes, young as he was, entertained it himself but had always fought against it, as visionary, or at least as one he had no right to indulge, till he had seen far more of the business of the world. But that Wentworth, who had been nursed in that business, himself a minister, and, from opportunity, so close an observer of human nature in all its shapes, should breathe such an opinion, made him wonder. He, however, attributed much to the unhappy event which had deprived him of his friend, had affected his health, and in fact driven him from England; much also to the melancholy reflections inspired by the visit they had just paid; and something perhaps to the wild and secluded scenery in which they were now travelling.

CHAPTER III.

THE PYRENEES.

Methinks I play as I have seen them do
In Whitsun pastorals.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE two friends had now entered the Pyrenees; had passed the city of Tarbes on the road to Bagnieres; and, leaving their carriage for the horses of the country, had got agreeably involved in that beautiful succession of vallies, one surmounting another, but each closed in by rocky, though wooded mounds,—forming a little world of itself, where the news of what was passing among the nations below, was neither known nor cared for. The head of each valley was invariably hid by a wood of pines, through which, as invariably gushed a torrent of the clearest water, forming a stream which filled the whole length of the glen with verdure.

On its banks were regular patches of corn, and maize, mingled among fruit trees, between which, gadded the vine—its ripe clusters hanging in festoons from tree to tree. The cottages to which these belonged, were built of stone, comfortably thatched, and sent forth a race of Montagnards, whose well-made limbs and elastic tread, crimson sashes, trunk hose, and Montero caps, (the costume of Henry IV.,) while they added to the beauty of the scene, made them look any thing but interested about political parties, or ministers of state. Every thing belonging to them was primitive; every thing within themselves. They sowed, and reaped, spun their own clothing, built their own houses, sung their own songs, and married and were given in marriage, every one, as it should seem, without stirring out of his own valley.

At that moment a groupe of peasants were gathering grapes; others were singing to their tambours basques; others, of both sexes, (the women with flowers in their hair,) dancing under a spreading chesnut.

Both Wentworth and De Vere were in rapture with the scene, and stopped their horses to enjoy it. They were peculiarly struck with the sound and the precision of the tambour basque, an instrument somewhat like an Æolian harp, but larger. It had four strings, but only two notes, (like the kettle-drum) two and two being merely octaves. These the performer sounded with a stick, covered with a mouse, or other soft skin, whence the name of tambour, though much softer than a drum. It was played in admirable time, and the effect among the hills was very pleasing. In a few minutes the dancing ceased, and the party sat down under the trees to their dinners of soup, brown bread, and grapes.

The travellers viewed them in silence, and both were pensive, till Wentworth (evidently under the influence of the sentiment with which he had last concluded,) exclaimed, "This is somewhat different from Parliament-street, as we saw it on the morning of our departure from London."

"It, indeed, seems a scene," said De Vere, "in which those illusive dreams you mentioned just now, might be indulged. And yet, I question if a man of the world, whatever his philosophy, even Bolingbroke himself (and least of all those heroes of Parliament-[illegible]) could dream here very long together. The [illegible], but the actors want interest."

[illegible] re was thinking of his elegant cousin, [illegible] between her beautiful manner, and the sun [illegible] down-right activity of the people before him.

"This from you! Yo[illegible] so romantic?" observed Wentworth, inquiring[illegible]

"I love my liberty," return[illegible] De Vere, "but I love my fellow-men; and to be my-fellow-men, they should be like myself, which these good people ([illegible] nar[illegible]ment to their happiness) are not. Had [illegible] n among them, indeed, possibly I might ne[illegible] ted them; or, if I had, and were even in[illegible] some knowledge of other manners, I might, [illegible] honest Hottentot boy, upon getting once mor[illegible]

reach of his sooty kinsfolks, strip off my fine clothes, and run back to the wild haunts of my childhood."

"It is certain," Wentworth, "that if ever the pastoral spirit, which seems to be inherent in our nature, could revive, after being plunged in the exciting objects we all pursue, it would be in such a place as this; and Bolingbroke could never have had better scope for his *Ubi bene, ibi patria.*"

With this sentiment the friends rode on, turning the summit of this beautiful valley, from which they descended into another, through a broad and natural avenue of Chesnut trees, leading to a picturesque Pyrenean-house at the bottom. It was an inn which they knew was somewhere thereabouts, and of which, in fact, they were in search. What pleased, and not a little surprised them, was the landlord; a brown and handsome Pyrenean about forty, who had spied them through a glass the moment they appeared on the summit, and who waited their arrival before his door.

He accosted them in excellent English, both as to language and accent.

"Gentlemen," said he, with an air and tone, far superior to any Boniface in England, "you are welcome to La Chataignerie," (for so the house was called;) "I rejoice to see you are English, and your dinner shall be ready in a minute. The moment I saw you, I ordered the trout and eels to be prepared, and you shall have excellent wine."

As this came from a man in the full Basque costume, trunk breeches, bare knee, a close jacket, and Montero cap, (both the latter of brown cloth,) the astonishment of the travellers was great, and they hastily asked if he was their countryman?

"I have not that honour," said the landlord, "but I long knew, and loved the English, as God knows I ought," added he, crossing himself.

"We shall have an interesting dinner," said Wentworth to De Vere, as François led the way to a room overlooking a dashing torrent. Here a table, spread with a clean damask cloth, and silver spoons, with the smoking trout that had been promised, invited them

to a repast for which, with all their sentiment, they were very well prepared.

The landlord of course told them his history. It seems, that some six and twenty years before, a Major Stanley, of the noble house which bears that ancient name, (loved and consecrated in our history) passed this way without an attendant, having lost his servant by illness on the road. Struck with the place, he remained some days, and was so pleased with the vivacity and intelligence of François, (then not above fifteen) that he took him into his service with the consent of his father, a peasant in the neighbourhood. The difficulty, however, was to get his own consent, for he interposed a thousand objections. In truth, young and *espiégle* as he was, the poor boy was already in love, (though she had yet reached but fifteen summers,) with the little brunette, who was daughter of the then landlord of La Chataignerie. But the match was too great for *le pauvre François*, whose father had nothing but an orchard to support him, and many other children. So in the end, François was fain to go and seek his fortune with Major Stanley; and, from his account, many were the tears that fell from his pretty toya,* at his departure.

But was she forgotten? Ah! no! François grew up to manhood, and served with his master in England, and on the continent, and saw many pretty girls, but none of them, he said, had such kindness in their eye, (at least for him) as the little Catalina. Well,—by fidelity and attention to his master, he acquired his esteem and gratitude too; for, following him to Jamaica, where the major went with his regiment, and died, François nursed him so affectionately in his last sickness, that he left him a hundred pounds, and all his wardrobe and moveables, which netted two hundred more. François was now rich; richer than Catalina's father himself; and what was quite as extraordinary, he was thirty, and still in love. He had an irresistible desire, therefore, to return to La Chataignerie, if only to inquire whether Catalina was alive. He did so,

* In the Pyrenean patois, a young woman is called Toya.

found her not only alive, but single, for she had resisted great offers, she knew not why, from a baker at Tarbes, and a *restaurateur* at Barèges. The cheek of Catalina had lost its freshness; but this little account made it as blooming as ever in the eyes of François, who offered, and was accepted with joy.

Upon this he immediately changed his fine English clothes for the coarse mountain dress of his youth, and soon became master of the inn himself;—"where," said he, "I have lived a blessed life without ever stirring from it; though my chief pleasure is when I chance to receive my dear master's countrymen, as I do today."*

So saying he bowed, not ungracefully, and received felicitations on his history, which were sincerely stowed. It furnished still more food for the speculations of both the gentlemen,—who admired the romantic site of François' dwelling, and wondered it was not oftener visited by the restless pilgrims of Britain. The landlord assured them he had no cause of complaint, for that during the season for the waters, the Pyrenean hamlets were well stocked with travellers, and that many had lately passed in their way to Barèges, and St. Sauveur, towns now not far off.

"We have had," said De Vere, as they mounted their horses, to pursue their way to Lourde, "a beautiful lesson on true natural happiness, unsophisticated by the artificial excitements with which, under our management of them, we contrive to plague ourselves."

"I wish all the Aristippusses I have seen," cried Wentworth, "with ribbands and stars on their breasts, but hearts within, worn out and *blazés* with great passions, could have seen this place and heard this story. Bolingbroke's inscriptions are nothing to it."

To this, De Vere heartily assented, for it flattered all his feelings, and fell in with all his favourite principles; so that, both gentlemen meditated internally over La Chataignerie, long after they had quitted it. At length, breaking silence, "I believe," said Wentworth, "you

* This story is exactly true in all its parts.

knew this good fellow's history when you talked so emphatically just now of your young Hottentot. At any rate, you see it is not the having mixed in the world that always prevents men from being happy out of it."

"It is not I who want that lesson," answered De Vere; "I who am not only untried, but too poor, both in fortune and reputation, to be of service; though too rich, while I have a brown loaf, to be the hanger-on of a party or a patron. But *you* are different, and, whatever right you may have to complain of particular persons, you have no right yet to live for yourself, and dream away life as you just now talked of doing."

"All this is very fine," said Wentworth; "but I fear, if only public virtue were concerned, in my present humour it would not last long. My fear, after all, is, that however we may be delighted with it in books, the imagination of no one is strong enough to keep seclusion warm. I might otherwise leave ambition to those who murdered Beaufort; yet, I should be glad (if only to solve a problem in the moral history of man,) to make the discovery whether it is possible for any one beyond a certain age, and who has at all tasted of public excitement, to throw it off and be happy with privacy, and nothing but his imagination to gild it. Show me such a man, and I may still be a dreamer."

De Vere thought of Okeover and Flowerdale, whose history he recounted; but Wentworth rejected it, as not in point. "He was evidently," he said, "a country gentleman, with a good estate, without which, perhaps, his philosophy would not have served him. Besides, you say he was fully interested in the business and politics of the world. This is not what I want. Bolingbroke, indeed had his favourite maxim of '*vacare literis.*' But this was only secondary in his mind: his real wish, to the last, was for power. What I *do* want is a man of keen faculties, buoyant and active, with spirits under no disgusts, swayed by no other absorbing passion, and therefore fit for the world if he pleases, yet rising above its ambition by sufficing to himself wherever he goes. Show me, I say, such a man, and

as at present disposed, I should be inclined to enlist under him."

De Vere laughed, and said he knew of no such person, but, under such an alternative, would not show him if he could.

"He is not to be found," observed Wentworth, "and therefore my dream of romance may continue for a few weeks at least, without danger."

At that moment, they had arrived at the castle of Lourde, high among the mountains, to the governor of which they had letters; but, on presenting themselves, they were sorry to find he was absent at Toulouse; and as the only auberge in the place was a poor one, and their horses could proceed no further without rest, they were glad to learn, that by a pleasant walk among torrents and fells, they might easily reach the romantic St. Sauveur. The sergeant of Lourde, who commanded the small party called the garrison, in lieu of the governor, said they would there find a *hôtel magnifique*, and, being famous for its waters, *la meilleure société du monde*. They, therefore, set out on foot, leaving their horses to follow as soon as refreshed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN OF IMAGINATION.

I pr'ythee, shepherd, if that love or gold,
Can in this desert place buy entertainment;
Bring us where we may rest ourselves, and feed.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE travellers had not proceeded very far when St. Sauveur opened to their view, though at a great distance, and perched up among the crags like eagles' nests. It overhung one of the numerous mountain-torrents that abounded, and was, as usual, backed by a grove of dark pines. The western sun, clothed all the front

in splendor, but rendered the heat powerful enough for a pair of fatigued and hungry pedestrians to wish to avoid it. By entering the bed of a river, now almost dry, they thought not only to do this, but to escape a hill. Accordingly, they pursued a goat-path worn within the channel, till they came to a sort of natural shrubbery beyond which, voices were plainly heard, though the speakers were hid from view. Again their own language struck their ear; but it did not now so much surprise them, as in the instance of honest François, who had, indeed, apprived them that they might meet many of their countrymen among these mountains. They pursued the sound; though Wentworth observed he had little wish to trench upon the perfect freedom from English associations, for which he had come abroad, by renewing among these unknown countrymen, the reminiscences of home. "We have enough of them," said he, "in ourselves."

As their way, however, lay directly through the party they were obliged to proceed, and soon came within sight of a tent pitched among the shrubs, close to the banks where glided the mountain stream which they had pursued. Here, broader and fuller, it furnished the fishermen with some of that excellent trout with which almost all the Pyrenean rivulets abound. The voices had ceased, but they now heard the tuning of a guitar, as if in preparation to accompany a song.

Indeed on the outside of the tent, lay other musical instruments,—as a French horn, and a clarionet, intermixed with two or three fishing-rods, nets, and some baskets with plates, unfolded napkins, and cut bread—indicating that there had been a repast within the tent. A tethered mule, with panniers, was feeding not far off.

Presently the guitar, being perfectly in tune, and a voice cleared with a few hems, a well known song in English arrested the attention of the friends, who looked at one another as if astonished at the appositeness of the sentiment to their late conversation.

"Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note,
Unto the sweet bird's throat—

Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i'the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather."

Neither the voice nor the accompaniment were of an ordinary musician; and the effect both upon Wentworth and De Vere was peculiar, not indeed so much from the music as the sentiment. In ancient days, they would have thought it a warning, and become superstitious. As it was, they were both much impressed, and confessed they could scarce have thought the coincidence possible.

There discourse (for they were now close to the tent) brought out some of the company, which consisted of a person who seemed the master of the feast, and another, both evidently English; two French gentlemen, and two ladies. One of the latter was also French; but the other, the musician (for she was not yet disengaged from her guitar,) from a mixture of English manner with foreign features, left it doubtful to what country she belonged.

The gentleman who appeared the host, and was dressed in a green coat with short skirts, red waistcoat, and both coat and waistcoat bound with a narrow gold binding, now advanced to reconnoitre, when the travellers began to apologize if they intruded, stating how they came there. The gentleman, who had great good humour as well as vivacity of countenance, said he had started out thus abruptly from hearing his native language spoken so close to him, "though I might," said he, "have supposed that it was some of my countrymen from Barèges, who often do us the honour of a visit. However, you will give us the pleasure of taking some coffee after your walk. I expect my ser-

vants with it from a hut close by, which is a sort of cooking place."

Wentworth complimented the gentleman on the agreeableness of his amusements, and in particular on the music they had heard,—looking at the lady, who had by this time untied the ribband which bound her guitar.

"It is a favourite song of mine," said the gentleman, "both for the melody and the thought: the latter particularly; or, perhaps," added he, with a sort of frank significance, "I should not at this moment be here. But come, (observing from the air and manner of both his guests that they were not common persons,) "you ought at least to know who it is that has the pleasure of receiving you. My name is Rivers, of Northamptonshire; and the lady there, who gave us the music, is, luckily for me, *my* lady, Mrs. Rivers."

He with the same vivacity named his other guests; and then with good-natured politeness, left the travellers to tell their names, or not, as they pleased. Wentworth having shortly recited them, the party now proceeded to a wide spreading elm, which covered them all over like a green tent. Here a man-servant in livery, and a very pretty *soubrette*, with a head dress formed by a silk handkerchief of many colours becomingly disposed, served up the fuming repast. At the same time, two peasant lads, having climbed into a cork tree, higher up the wood, sounded the French horn and clarionet, which the travellers had seen on their arrival, in a beautiful melody, which was pleasingly echoed from the opposite hill.

The whole of the original party seemed gratified; but somehow or another, both De Vere and Wentworth were grave. They were indeed pleased with the scene; and they were forcibly struck with the animation and intense pleasure which Mr. Rivers seemed to take in it. He also did the honours, if we may so call them, of the valley of St. Sauveur, with all the science of a painter, and all the enthusiasm of a poet; and he wound up one panegyric on a particular piece of scenery made more sublime by the approaching dusk, by saying that it always brought him nearer to heaven.

"But the whole country," said he, "together with the freedom of life which it affords, are such as makes most other modes of living contemptible."

De Vere looked at Wentworth as much as to say he had at last found the man he was in quest of; and the mental employment of both, in applying the scene before them to the subject of their late conversations, produced pensiveness more remarkable from the alacrity and feeling of Mr. Rivers, in every thing he said and did.

His eye, indeed, was generally "in a fine phrensy rolling," which could scarcely escape the most obtuse observer. It certainly was not unheeded by either Wentworth or De Vere, to whom he became more and more a subject of examination. Of this, however, he was wholly unconscious; though, had he been the reverse, it would probably have made no difference; so much did he seem to throw his heart, or at least his imagination, into whatever subject he was upon.

In their walk to the town of St. Sauveur, Wentworth ventured to ask him, if he preferred these mountains to his own country; and if he were not curious to know what was passing there.

"Why, yes!" said Mr. Rivers; "though I have not been in England for some years, I am still, and ever shall be, an Englishman. I love the soil, and the people; though they are slow and not easily kindled to enjoy that taste for natural pleasures, which God has given to all of us, if we knew how to use it."

De Vere watched him, and was struck with the vivacity with which he said this. The contrast, too, between the vehemence of Mr. Rivers's manner and the silent sensibility of his wife, did not escape observation. She seemed to hang on all her husband said, with a pleasure not the less visible, because not expressed in language. It had "an understanding but no tongue." In truth both Wentworth and De Vere were struck with the speaking expression of her countenance, and the elegant *tourneur* of her shape and mien, which forcibly, and with mixed feelings of melancholy and pleasure, reminded De Vere of one, who was, under every speculation, seldom out of his thoughts.

"I would give something," whispered De Vere. "to know this man's history."

"We may perhaps, obtain it in time," replied Wentworth. "Wilmot, you know, prescribed desultory loitering wherever we choose; and I never felt so disposed to loiter."

In fact the travellers were soon established at the *hôtel magnifique* of the French serjeant at Lourde, which was, in truth, a comfortable house. Mr. and Mrs. Rivers showed them all attentions; and both Wentworth and De Vere, while studying the characters of their new acquaintance, forgot their late speculations on ambition, and even ambition itself, for many days.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN OF IMAGINATION TELLS HIS STORY.

Never did young man fancy
With so eternal and so fixed a soul.
SHAKSPEARE.

THERE is no intimacy which grows so quickly as that contracted by fellow countrymen in a stranger land. Mr. Rivers soon found out, without being dazzled by it, the quality of Wentworth, with whose reputation he was familiar, and the high blood and connections of De Vere, with whose accomplishments and opinions he was much struck.

On the other hand, it was discovered, that Mr. Rivers had himself once been intended for public life; and was actually well known to the world as the author of some beautiful sonnets, which had charmed many readers. This awakened the curiosity of the travellers still more; and as he was of a free, warm, imparting disposition, in a few days they obtained from him the history they wanted; if that can be called history, which relates

rather to the workings of a strong imagination than to any activity or usefulness of life.

It was brought about one evening, after Mrs. Rivers had retired from the supper-table. Wentworth having learned that Mr. Rivers was the kinsman of a person of consequence in a former administration, under whom he had actually been initiated in business, expressed his astonishment that he had not continued to pursue that career.

De Vere expressed no astonishment, but was, if possible more earnest than Wentworth himself to know what had induced the change. The French and the English friends who had been of his party, when the travellers first met them, were also of this, and added their wishes to know something of a story which they concluded could not be without interest, though it might be without adventures.

Won by these united intreaties, Mr. Rivers complied, and thus continued the conversation which led to it:—

"I have told you that I have not what is called succeeded in the world; to be sure, as far as the hopes of success were concerned, I was even in boyhood, the most unpromising creature that ever lived. As a child, my nurse-maid said, I took every thing by the rule of contrary. I would neither eat, nor sleep, nor learn my letters, except as it suited my fancy; and once, one evening when I was scarcely in breeches, and they wanted to put me to bed, I was found, after a long search, in a nest I had been making for myself under a Portugal laurel. There I had actually intended to pass the night; the birds made nests, and why should not I? My father and mother laughed at it; and I could not comprehend why I was so scolded by Deborah, except that the moss and damp had quite spoiled my clean trowsers.

"It was the same at school; I got my lessons when it suited me, and was flogged when it did not. Evening school (I speak of the first I was at,) I could not bear. We were on the borders of a forest, and I loved so of an evening to walk in a forest.

"If my voluntary reading pleased me I went on with it, instead of writing exercises, as I ought to have done, and finished the exercises when I might have been playing at cricket. If I do the business I am obliged to do, thought I, what signifies when I do it?

"I was but ten years old when I became acquainted with this beautiful country. My father's health made it necessary for us to go to Bagnieres de Bigorre, not far from hence. Perhaps it is the most charming spot in Europe; but what I chiefly remember it for was its delicious figs, and the market-girls who sold them. They used to run after me, calling me '*leur petit Anglois, aimable enfant,*' *et cætera*, but always ending with '*Ah! que j'ai de bonnes figues; Achetez à moi, joli petit cœur.*' Their figs, and compliments, and short petticoats, and crimson head-dresses, are still before me, and made an impression I shall never lose.

"There was an orange-grove, half a league from the town, that had belonged to an old monastery then in ruins, and had a garden and fountain, which were my delight. The gardener let me do as I liked, and eat his mulberries or play with his doves without scolding. He was pleased with my sprightliness; and he said that, except for my love to lie still on the turf, content with merely breathing the perfume of the air, I ought to have been a French boy. To this wild place I was allowed to go at stated periods, as a reward for behaving well. I went on a boriquo, while my father and mother drove in a calesh. How delightfully sleepless was the night before the party! The place filled my infant imagination, and excites me still.

"We returned to England, but my character returned with me. At Winchester I seldom went to the hill, but in play-hours played truant, to walk to the neighbouring villages, stopping at cottages, or even alehouses in the road, to hear any tale that might be told, but especially if the relator or the facts were out of the common way. By degrees, this generated a taste for extracting amusement from passing scenes or characters, no matter what: if they were pleasing or prominent, well; if not my fancy made them so. I afterwards be-

came a poet, and the sonnets which you are pleased to mention with approbation, are the mere glass of my mind, such as it was then.

"I remember when this sonnet-making genius first took me. There was an arbour of sweet-brier in a neighbouring gentleman's garden, and nothing would serve me, but I must compose an Ode to Nature in this arbour. I knew the gentleman, and might have got leave well enough; but to steal there unknown was the thing. One morning in July, with the birds chirping, and the sweet-brier smelling, and all my genius awake, I was seized by a pair of rough hands belonging to a clown of a gardener, who never cared for an ode in his life. He thought I concealed myself to steal the gooseberries, and was for dragging me to his master. I was afraid of the ridicule of the discovery, (for he had also seized my ode,) and, though only thirteen, I resisted with all my might. The consequence was, before I got away, a good beating, and the loss of my ode, which was read and laughed at by the whole town. But as I had escaped unknown, I never acknowledged it.

"This was at thirteen: two years after, the taste proved a little more inconvenient. I was invited for the holidays, by an old man, who had been a friend of my father; who was now dead. He had not a relation in the world, and gave out, that he intended to make me his heir. I went with joy; but he was a humourist and a miser, and locked up himself, his servants, and me, in our bed-rooms at eight o'clock. It was summer, and I did not like to go to bed at eight in summer. So I made a rope ladder, and escaped to play the flute in the fields, and eat raspberries and cream with a neighbouring farmer, whose daughter had the whitest skin in the world.

"I was discovered, and sent back in disgrace, and the will was altered. But my mother forgave me, considering the reasons; indeed, she had a spice of romance herself.

"'Tis certain, that I scarcely ever took a walk which I called, and perhaps intended to be, a solitary one, but I turned it into as much busy occupation as a Dutch

picture: for I seldom returned without something like an adventure; some new acquaintance, some other man's or other woman's history, (I always liked the last best,) some danger run, just enough to be not quite disagreeable; perhaps some little distress relieved, which last, (ah! that the instances had been more frequent,) always sent me home to a happy rest. 'Tis true, imagination gave the zest to all, and whether I was benighted, and shared a peasant's supper, or, as has been the case, dined with a squire of high degree, whom I had never seen before, every thing was delightful, for every thing was romance.

"At college!—but I wish I could pass over that eventful place, for there I was enchanted, honoured, and disgraced;—the world it opened, ravished my very soul. I was surrounded by genius, and the works of genius. Every man who had a spark of it, was an idol to me: every grove an Athens.

"My Winchester lore told well, and I gained the prize for Latin verse. This made me resolved to stand for a Merton fellowship. It required study, and I remained a whole long vacation to read. Accordingly I passed all the mornings among my books. In the evenings, I diverted myself with riding, or walking among the villages in the vicinity. Once, I was seen by a rival candidate, dancing in a barn. He made the most of it, and the fellows who were to decide the election, looked shy. But this was not the worst.

"Every body knows Bagley wood, near the city. It is usually full of nightingales. But it was frequented by other beings as well as nightingales. Their calling was impure, and their company disgraceful. The proctors resolved to clear this wood, and one unfortunate night, when I was there, it was beset by a posse of constables. I declare to heaven I was there only as a votary of the muse and of the moon. But the dogberries made no distinction. I was dragged before the magistrates in common with a number of low people of both sexes; and though I escaped being committed as a rogue and a vagabond, I lost my fellowship, I afterwards redeemed myself, and resumed my old habits.

"Of course I was laughed at, but I laughed in my turn. Let those laugh that win, and I always won, for I was always more or less happy. To be sure I was often deceived, ah! how often! A stream, which at home I had thought a lovely brook, when I had seen others, seemed nothing but a ditch. An old man in a soldier's coat, whom I went a mile out of the road to show to an inn, and promised to treat, in return for the story of the battle of Lafeldt, picked my pocket by the way. The rascal told me he was the grenadier in a picture of Lord Ligonier; that he had sat for it; and I believed him. When I came to see the picture, he was no more like it than my dog.

"Then Belinda! she had seemed to me to combine all the virtues, and all the graces, only because she was a pretty girl, and played the spinet. When I visited her again, after having been at college, and in London, she turned out to be a country dowdy; and I saw her without a sigh, consigned to the arms of an honest, butter-making farmer, to whom she made an excellent butter-making wife.

"But what of this? For the moment I believed all that my feelings told me; and I never could bear to be convinced, at least at the time, that I was wrong.

"Strict abstract truth, the realities of things as they may appear to an angel, are not within man's power, at least not in mine. The whole world is but a dream. Do you think I admire the colours of the rainbow less, because I am told there is really no colour in it? And what if I do know the truth of things, will they on that account please me more, or so much, as my fancy makes them?

"At the time I was speaking of, my father was dead, and the estate was mine; but my mother, whom I loved, lived in the manor-house. It was necessary to choose a profession; for my fortune, though competent, was by no means sufficient to occupy me. Besides, as my mother, who was a sensible woman, observed, an idler is not respectable, even though rich. You have parts and powers, she said, and so I had; but I knew

not where they lay, and still less, with such a disposition, how to employ them.

I had a huge desire to see the world, and read voyages and travels wistfully; I even thought of the sea. But luckily I was always sea-sick, and sea-sickness and romance do not agree; besides, there is no sentiment on ship-board; a great deal of honour, but no roses. Gallant fellows! they deserve all their rewards. I bow before their superior energies; but these energies were not mine.

"I thought of the army, and might have gone into the guards. But I found that wandering as a soldier's life sometimes is, it was not the sort of wandering I affected. In short, wandering in company with a whole regiment, and, above all, under command, did not suit me. Perhaps I should not have minded it with a set of gypsies.

"We had great relations, and my mother applied to one of them to recommend me to a great man for employment. He was a great man himself, and made me his secretary, *en attendant mieux*. But he was of opinion, with Sir R. Walpole, that poets made bad men of business, and were fitter for speculation than for practice. He warned me of this, and fairly told me if I continued silly (as he called my romance,) he must leave it to romance to promote me.

"I accepted the conditions, and went to court, which dazzled, and, for a little while, pleased me. I fluttered about, and sunned myself in smiles, all but those of my patron, who was too matter-of-fact for me.

"My first quarrel with him was, that he seldom went into the country, and when there, always wanted to get back again; yet had the cruelty (which I thought tyranny,) to send me sometimes to town about business, in August, while he remained behind:—though I knew he could not enjoy himself.

"His notions of a country seat were such as might be expected. What misery, on laying down a book to wish for a stroll in a flower garden, yet have to walk a quarter of a mile for it, and then find the door locked.

"But he cared little for roses, and was always among

his papers; and, (strange as I thought it,) wanted me to be so too. This want of ideality discomposed me, and I thought myself in every thing but power and riches (trifling ingredients) above him. He is in trammels, thought I, with all his honours; he is ever behind the throne in the House of Lords, or under the gallery of the House of Commons. He cannot, like me, light his lamp to Ariel or Oberon, or the field of Shrewsbury, or Bosworth; nor if the weather be soft, can he shut up his papers, and fly to the forest. It will be seen that I fled there too often.

"I did not dislike, nay, I even liked London, but it was chiefly because it prepared me the better for the country. I laid in store of ideas; I contemplated artificial elegance; I gained an insight into artificial character, and I then flew, with tenfold alacrity, to the enjoyment of liberty wherever it took me. Rough nature pleased me the more, because I knew its contrast. But nature, rough or smooth, was what I wanted. In town every thing was masked. This may seem to afford greater scope for the imagination, of which I am a votary. But no! there is nothing to spring from; no original spark to set all in a blaze. For a man of the world, London is charming; but, spite of my lot, I was not a man of the world.

"How I always loved Gray's Ode, who, in a twilight walk, used to think he saw Parnassus in every hill, and Aganippe in every fountain. What was it that did this? Fancy; and twilight, which permits Fancy to work. Broad day, or the hum of a town, would have destroyed it in a moment. But I had more fancy even than Gray, though not so good a poet; for even in broad daylight I could often see Hebe's cheek in a milkmaid, and fairy steps in a town meadow.

"Think not, however, from what I have said, that even towns can give no play to the fancy. Many would say the fancy is there best exercised. It is certain that she flutters much, (I will not say most,) in courts and feasts. When I have seen my patron's niece, Lady Anne, sweeping by in silken sheen, with lace and diamonds, and waving plumes, I have thought

her a princess, and gone home and dreamt of her as such. The next day I have found her in a mob cap. The illusion was gone; but I was happier while it lasted than unhappy at its being dispelled: so on the whole I gained by it.

"Perhaps you will call me mad; but does Bacon write madness when he says there is a natural, though a corrupt love of falsehood, that gives pleasure. 'Truth,' says he, 'is an open *daylight*, that does not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-light. Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, and imaginations, as one would, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition?'*

"This was my creed; and I did not repent it, though my patron and kinsman told me I should never do, and *reminding* me of my conditions, talked of my quitting my employment.

"I heard it with great independence; nay, with something like contempt. Shall I own the truth? All the time the lecture was going on, a pot of wallflower smelt so sweet under my nose, that the country, in beautiful pastoral rose before my eyes. While Sir John talked of docketting letters, I was thinking of making hay; while he referred to Downing-street, I was upon the banks of the Dee; and when he mentioned parliamentary eloquence, I was dreaming of the nightingale. It was this that gave me a sort of elevation of spirit in my reply, which absolutely astonished my patron. His astonishment reached its height when I took him at his word, and said I would quit his service.

"We did not quarrel, and I thought Lady Anne squeezed me tenderly by the hand when I took leave of her—there certainly was a tear in her eye, and I wrote a sonnet upon it.

"Restored to liberty, I added what I could to my mother's jointure, and reducing myself to what I

* Bacon's Essays, Art. Truth.

thought a competent allowance, I escaped to the lake of Geneva, on purpose to row where St. Preux had rowed with Eloise to the rocks of Miellerie. I found no trace of him: but the place did much, and fancy the rest. The realities of Rome, have not interested more than the mere illusions of these scenes. Yes! divine Jean Jacques! I have followed thee in thy dreams with a pleasure which none but a kindred dreamer could feel. I have sought thee at Charmettes, and tracked thee to Savoy. My heart has beat in the same places as thine. Thou art one whom I could for ever admire, thy carelessness of the future; thy confidence in the present; thy fond imaginations, and the enchantments of thy sentiment—all make me bow down before the altar of thy genius, and adore thee as an Indian adores the sun."

This apostrophe, uttered with upraised hands and kindling eyes, for a while stopped the enthusiast in his narration. Some of the company caught a little of his fire, and the French gentleman was delighted with it, and complimented him upon his feeling. De Vere also had been particularly interested by other parts of his narration; and though he felt that, with all his imagination, Rousseau was a scoundrel, he feared to express an opinion, lest it should interrupt the story. Wentworth had watched the whole with fixed attention, and entreated the speaker to proceed.

Mr. Rivers went on. "I roamed about the Alps, and pursued the object of my devotion to Chamberri; where, however, I could not help wondering that a man even of imagination could find play for it and compose letters, or any thing else, while in the sensible contemplation of nothing but chimney-tops and house-tiles. But Rousseau was the prince of imagination.

"I returned to France, and roamed on foot through the delices of the pays de Henri Quatre: and thence all over the Pyrenees, on the Spanish side as well as this. My warmth of fancy never left me; every smuggler was a condottieri, every priest a troubadour. It is certain that I many a time loitered to hear a guitar, until I knew not where to sup, and have actually slept in my

cloak at a cottage door. But remember, this was the climate of roses, of warmth, of geniality, (to coin a word), of which we poor Saxons in vain endeavour to form an idea.

"Once, after having consumed a whole day in exploring the Pic de Midi, where I had seen nothing but the Iserre, a roaming wolf, or a distant lake, I began to long for a shelter wherein to pass the night. It had now closed in; but I knew that the moon would soon rise; and, as I had continued descending, till I had got to the base of the mountain, I hoped quickly to find what I wanted. I was not disappointed, for the moon getting a little above the horizon, by illuminating two or three cottage casements to the east, showed me I had returned to the haunts of men. It was the hamlet of St. Elmo. I looked for some little auberge, such as the smallest village in England generally affords, but could discover none. It did not disturb me, for by experience, I knew I might trust to the good nature of the people. I only stopped to ascertain, by outward appearance, at which habitation I had the chance of being received with least inconvenience. With this view I leaned over the gate of a little orchard, and for a while enjoyed the lovely freshness of the herbage. All was silent; but suddenly the silence was broken, not disagreeably, by the sound of a fife playing at a distance. The tone was now merry, now grave, but chiefly the former. This was quite enough to put me in motion; so entering the gate, I directed my steps to the opposite hedge, whence the sound came, and found three or four young lads, and as many girls, in the basque dress, who had left their supper to enjoy a dance by the light of the moon.

"It had just ceased as I came up, and I heard the fifer, with a tone of commendation and superiority at the same time, saying to a young girl, '*Vraiment tu as bien fait ma belle; presque aussi bien que nous autres, n'ayez pas peur. Mais continuez,*' said he, addressing the whole party, '*vive la dance! viva la gioia!*' With this he resumed his fife, and the little troop prepared to renew their sport. I was at a loss

whether to break in upon them by showing myself, or to go back to the house and make my wants known; but I could not help stopping to remark the young person who had been the object of the fifer's commendation. I, however, could discover nothing, though the lights in the sky grew brighter and brighter, except that she was remarkably graceful, and moved in beautiful time. I never longed so much for a dance in my life.

"Not knowing how best to announce myself, I put my flute together, and made a second to the air to which the party were dancing, which by no means had a bad effect. But it stopped them, and all came towards me at once with curiosity, but not rudeness. One of the young men, indeed, the fifer, (who seemed to preside,) exclaimed, '*Que diable, que veaux tu!*" But it went no farther, particularly when I told them I was a stranger who loved music and dancing as well as they; was benighted, and knew not where to find refreshment. But I observed the young girl retreated hastily to the house. I was soon discovered to be a foreigner, and when I had announced I was English, I found it did me no harm; and an old lady, who had by this time joined the party, and seemed the mother, or at least the person in authority over all, told me in very good French, unmixed with *patois*, that as there was no inn, I should lodge where I was.

"Nothing could please me more; so I was willingly ushered into rather a spacious sort of common room—in fact, the kitchen, round which two or three doors led into smaller rooms, where the family slept. One of them, in which there was no despicable bed, was allotted to me; and, mean time, a clean wench, who was the only servant, began to prepare a supper of eggs and legumes, for Monsieur. But as this would take time, (and time allotted to pleasure is always precious in France) the young fifer, who, to do him justice, had as much vivacity and alertness as any of his countrymen, proposed they should take one more dance, with the addition of my flute to his fife, if Monsieur would condescend. The smiles of two or three young girls, who

showed their white teeth very prettily in seconding the request, would have made me comply at any time; but I hoped for a dance myself, and looked round for the fifer's nymph, with some disappointment at not finding her among them. He had himself gone in quest of her, but returned with a mortified air, mingled too with a little resentment, at her refusal to return. '*Cette petite chose, Zerlina,*' said he, angrily, '*veux tu la croire? Elle fait la modeste.* She won't dance any more,' said the fifer, 'and I was teaching her to dance so well.'

"'Perhaps,' observed the eldest female, to whom he addressed himself, and who was his sister, 'you were too rough with her Jacques; you know I always told you she was not made for roughness; *elle est trop delicate, pauvre fille, outre ses malheurs.*' Jacques gave her a look, at first angry; but afterwards softening into great seriousness, he added, '*Oui, tu, as raison, Jacqueline; et moi, comme toujouis, j'ai tort.*' With that he flung out of doors, and we heard no more of dancing that night, for Jacques seemed the life and soul of the party.

"By this time my little supper was ready, and I sat down to it with appetite enough; but somehow or another I could not help thinking of Zerlina, and was only consoled by the hope of seeing her in the morning."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAN OF IMAGINATION CONCLUDES HIS STORY.

> Thou, dearest Perdita.....
> Or I'll be thine, my fair,
> Or not my father's, for I cannot be
> Mine own, nor any thing to any, if
> I be not thine. SHAKSPEARE.

"NOR was the hope disappointed; for as the family were all cottagers, though at their ease, they could not afford separate apartments, still less separate meals. I

was delighted, therefore, to find all my hosts (Zerlina amongst them,) seated on a stone bench under a luxuriant vine, at their cheerful early breakfast, made still more cheerful by the freshness of the morning. To be sure, the repast was at first but of brown bread and goat's milk; but not only was I accustomed to that, but it was soon reinforced by *œufs frais*, and a *tasse de chocolat*, which I found was meant for me. The romance of the thing gave the whole scene a zest, which more sumptuous entertainments to me often wanted. But who would have thought of the quality of a breakfast, or even of breakfast itself, when Zerlina was there?

"She arose with the rest on my approach; and while they all opened in little babbling compliments, she made me a silent but so graceful a courtesy, and the courtesy was accompanied by such a blushing air of retiredness, and yet, as it seemed to me, it was so polite (if I did not even think it so high bred,) that my interest, already much on the *qui vive*, was all her's in a moment.

"She was the clearest brunette I ever saw; and full of expression, at least I made her so, which is the same thing. She had the finest turned arms, and wrists, and hands; and her head was as well set on her neck as a statuary could have wished. But even if it had been ill-shaped, the gipsey had contrived to set it off with a crimson silk net, the tassels of which were intermixed with a profusion of her dark tresses, in a manner so piquante that there was no keeping one's eyes off it. Then her shape, form, figure, action, oh! they were inimitable. I cannot tell you, sir, how soon and how entirely she got possession of me; and yet without speaking a word."

De Vere would have smiled, had not some too interesting recollections come across him; so contenting himself with saying, he could perfectly well understand this, Mr. Rivers continued. "But she set herself off so by her dress! I cannot describe her dress; but you shall see it in her picture, as I sketched it, though it was no more than that of a Pyrenean Paysanne. It was a simple boddice of black silk, laced with crimson

bon, and having a stand-up collar in the nature of a ruff, which left open a graceful throat, ornamented by a string of coral, and a cross of gold. Beneath, a crimson petticoat, not silk, but of the fine stuff of the country, was just short enough to show the prettiest foot in the world.' Well! I had often been in love at first sight, but now I prepared for it in earnest. Jacques was at her side, and showed her all rustic attentions. He cut her loaf for her, called her eggs for her, and pressed her to eat. I thought Jacques looked particularly ugly. Yet she did not seem to encourage him, and said little in return for a thousand country compliments.

"You may suppose I was much questioned by my good humoured hosts, but not by her. She did not utter a word. But I observed she was very attentive to all I said, and I translated that into a great deal. We talked of England. '*Mam'selle entend l'Anglois,*' said Jacqueline, '*Est il possible?*' said I. 'I hate *l'Anglois,*' said Jacques. '*C'est une vilaine langue—Vous êtes malhonnête,*' said his mother.

"'*Toujours tort,*' cried Jacques, looking sulky, and was silent for the rest of the breakfast.

"I could enlarge much on all this, but will not detain you. It is sufficient, as you may suppose, that upon Jacqueline's information, I addressed myself in English to Zerlina, who answered me with some shyness, but very prettily, and only kindled my interest more and more to know who she was, and how she came to be domesticated with beings, evidently so much her inferiors. Besides, I remembered the expression of Jacqueline the evening before, '*Outre ses malheurs.*' No! there was no stirring till I had discovered what they were.

"Discover them I did, and strange they proved; strange enough even for me. You will perhaps scarce believe me when I tell you the native country of Zerlina was Poland: the seat of her misfortunes as well as those of so many others at that cruel time. I have told you I was no politician, and I never thought much about the rascally partition just then going on, though

dinned daily in my ears by my patron Sir John, from whom I had escaped. But I now thought of nothing else.

"Zerlina was the daughter and sister of the Staroste Zerlinsky. Her mother was English, and a Mordaunt; hence her pretty English tongue. And as Miss Mordaunt had travelled much in Italy for her health, hence Zerlina's Italian name. The family settled some time at Bagnieres, the Bath of the Pyrenees, to which people of all nations flocked; and here the match took place between Miss Mordaunt and the Staroste Zerlinski, and here Zerlina was born. Afterwards they went to Poland with a Pyrenean nurse, of whom hereafter.

"All was happy for some years; till those miseries arose, which afford no play to the imagination but such as I am by no means fond of.

"Zerlina's mother was dead, and her father had nobly opposed the three crowned birds of prey who were devouring his fine country. But he perished in unequal battle against the Russians, who claimed him, his son, and Zerlina, too, as subjects, by a law of their own making. The son was seized in his own house, and hurried to head-quarters to be tried for treason, though he had not yet been in arms, and had never heard of any sovereign but Poniatowski. Think of my glory, when I tell you his life was saved, though his liberty could not be preserved, by the energy of the gentle girl I have just described to you!"

Here the whole company became elevated with pleasure, as well as curiosity, and Mr. Rivers, greatly animated, went on.

"As soon as she heard of his capture, and of what he was accused, ignorant as she was of the world, and even of Poland, where she had never stirred from her father's house; unaccustomed even to the sight of men, (in truth but then barely eighteen) she conceived the great, the romantic design, God bless her for it," said Rivers, with an emotion caught by all his guests) "of appearing before the military tribunal that was to try him, with the hope to save his life.

The company were breathless.

"And nobly she performed it," continued Rivers, "though she had two hundred miles to travel; through roads full of savages, and of which she was wholly ignorant. With no male friend to protect her—nothing but a guide—she traversed her smoking country to the Russian head-quarters, and presenting herself to the general, besought him to hear her.

"'I have no hope,' said the tremulous girl, in tears, 'that begging a brother's life, as a favour, will do; but if a trial is allowed, and proofs that he has never been in arms, I have brought them with me to throw at your feet.'

"The astonished old Scythian, to whom she addressed herself, had some heart left. He looked at her, then at her papers, and then at her again; and for the first time in his life, hesitated about a military execution. But the proofs were clear, and Zerlina touching: and somehow or another he felt that Zerlinsky was innocent—so he sent him to Siberia.*

"As for Zerlina, after being allowed to embrace her brother, the same good Providence which had protected her to head-quarters, protected her back again. But she found the family fortune confiscated, her house in ruins, and had no where to lay her head but in the cottage of her nurse, then a widow, about thirty miles off. Here she remained in safety for three months, and passed for, and dressed like her nurse's daughter. But in vain, for the province, in which she now resided, had been seized by Prussia, and the good Frederick, finding a number of his beloved Prussians without wives, thought it but right, to provide them with that necessary comfort. He had just issued an order therefore, for every family in which there was a marriageable girl, to send her with a portion of household stuff, to the husbands whom he had selected for them, on the other side of the Oder. The general who had the execution of this order, had already pitched upon Zerlina.

"There was nothing left for her but to fly, and no

* For the honour of woman let it be known, that this is a story of real life.

place to fly but to England or the Pyrenees, the old nurse's native country.

"England was too far off, and Zerlina knew not her relations; so they flew, that is, they came in a wagon to Bagnieres, where the good nurse hoped to find her family. She found only an uncle, but he was grown old, and had retired to die in the hamlet where I met Zerlina. 'Twas a beautiful hamlet, as I have told you; and Zerlina, who courted privacy, entreated her nurse to settle there. She had saved some ducats from the wreck of her fortune, and all her mother's jewels: and luckily the Poles are very fond of jewels. Her nurse, too, had a little hoard. So they established themselves humbly but comfortably at St. Elmo. Alas! in twelve months Zerlina lost this faithful old friend, and was glad to be received as a boarder by the respectable old lady in whose cottage I found her."

Here Mr. Rivers stopped, as if doubtful whether he had not told enough, but no one seeming to relax in his disposition to listen, he went on.

"In this sequestered spot she endeavoured to forget herself. She liked the females, and all showed her attention. Too much attention for Jacques—but hang Jacques—he did not succeed and was so unhappy, poor fellow, that one morning he left us, with his Montero cap on his head, a long gun on his shoulder, and a leathern bottle and wallet at his back. He said he would just go and fetch us an iserre. I shall never forget his blue stockings, and red garters, tied under the knee. A fine figure, Sir, for a picture; and I wish I had taken him. But I never saw him afterwards. He said he would only climb the mountains; but he climbed into Savoy, and never came back while I was in the village."

Here Mr. Rivers concluded, saying, "My tale is done, for as you may suppose, the admiration I had conceived for the beauty of Zerlina, did not diminish by learning her history and character. Such was the esteem kindled by these, that had she been plain, I believe I should have been equally won. As it was—

> 'I loved her for the dangers she had past,
> And she loved me that I did pity them.'

In short, I married her. Marriage usually puts an end to imagination. But it was not so with mine. What I have been telling you, happened five or six years ago, and I am now about thirty; but, thank Heaven, imagination has not yet failed me. To be sure, I suppose Zerlina is not so much of a nymph as she used to be. But I cannot find it out, and the knowledge of her virtue, and the recollection of the romance which brought us together, not only point every charm, but are always new to our hearts. I have a boy who already repeats verses; and a girl who is an angel. We still dance in an orchard, and I still play the flute."

It was late night when the friends returned to their lodgings from Rivers' supper, and Rivers' story. They were both much impressed by it, and they agreed that what Wentworth in his speculation had despaired to meet with—a man full of interests unconnected with the business of life—was here found. They agreed, indeed, that most who were engaged in that business, would laugh at Rivers as a madman, or at best, as a very great fool. But to Wentworth, in his then frame of mind, the man of imagination seemed a person of a higher world. "For though," said Wentworth, "he talked a great deal of what many of us would, and not unjustly, call nonsense, yet never man was seemingly more qualified to laugh in his turn at our struggles, or tell a minister of state, I want nothing of you."

"He would at farthest," observed De Vere, "tell the minister to stand out of his sunshine, if he were in it. He beats Bolingbroke all to nothing with his philosophy and his inscriptions."

"He is certainly an enviable person," proceeded Wentworth; "and whether we may agree with him or not in the road he has taken to happiness, I never saw more sincerity in the enjoyment of it. He puts us matter-of-fact people to the blush. In imagining all, he possesses all."

"He possesses the woman he loves," remarked De Vere.

A silence of some minutes ensued, each revolving the tale they had heard according to his different no-

tions, till they separated for the night, to think of it alone.

They passed a week or two in this country of romance, the tutelary deities of which seemed the enthusiastic Rivers and his touching little wife—both of whom became objects of their close observation. In truth, the friends expected to detect something like vacuity in their enjoyments. But no. The imagination of Rivers gilded every thing with sunshine. He was out of doors whenever the weather did not forbid, and when it did, employed himself in reading to his wife.

The friends were curious to observe the subjects he generally chose, which they concluded would be of the Ariosto school. To their surprise they found them to be history and memoirs, or those writers who have best painted the manners and follies of men. Expressing wonder at it, Rivers told them that it was this that made his liberty so sweet; for if he did not know the world, either through himself or others, he might hanker after it. Hence, in graver moments, Plutarch and Horace were always his favourite authors.

De Vere particularly marked this, and said, if this were madness, there was at least method in it.

De Vere profited, by Rivers' acquaintance with the news of Poland, to extract from him both information and advice, as to the despairing prospect of that ill-fated country. But Rivers was far more disposed to talk of the *chasse de Ramier*, or wild pigeons, than of a hopeless cause which he could not remedy; and for this purpose he led them over the mountains to Bagnieres, to see what in fact was a curiosity, and, at that time of the year, proved no unpleasant expedition. In the *chasse de Ramier*, peasants skilled in the art, (some of them coming a hundred miles for that purpose,) repaired to a high wood of cork trees, over which flocks of these pigeons (thousands in number) regularly passed about this time, in the manner of birds of passage. The wood was lined with nets, extending perhaps three or four hundred yards. In advance, were raised masts, fifty or sixty feet high, on the top of which sat a watchman, provided with machines of light wood, in the

shape of a hawk with spread wings. On the approach of the birds to a proper point, these were launched in the air with great force, and the game, stooping to avoid the supposed destruction, flew into real, by endeavouring to pass through the wood, where they were caught in the nets.

The *chasse* was periodical, and lasted some days. It always occasioned a sort of a holiday when it occurred; hundreds of idlers, cheerful and uncheerful, flocking from the neighbouring places, (but especially Bagnieres) to behold the sport. These made a sort of fair, or rather encampment, chiefly composed of huts, which were run up in an hour or two, from boughs and branches. Here there was a universal pic-nic during the day, and many remained all night with no other bed than dry leaves. The night, however, was seldom entirely devoted to sleep: the watchers, tempted by that fine climate, beguiled the time by roaming about in companies to the sound of the guitar and tambour basque; which produced in the stillness, and especially at a distance, a delightful effect.

All this was so new, and at the same time so pleasing both to Wentworth and De Vere, that, could the former have forgotten he had been a minister, and might be so again, and the latter not only that he had been and was still a lover, but that he meditated a more distant flight from her he loved, both would have been content to have followed Rivers' standard for a much longer time than they did.

As it was, the diversion of gloomy remembrances was much assisted, and the health of Wentworth rapidly restored, by such a way of life.

CHAPTER VII.

REACTION.

Time hath, my lord, a wallet on his back
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion.
A great-sized monster of ingratitude
Those scraps are good deeds past; which are devoured
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon as done.

SHAKSPEARE.

TORRENTS and falls are delightful things to look at in fine weather; but one cannot always have fine weather. It is charming also to paint; but one cannot always be painting. The contemplation of man, indeed, under his various appearances, is delightful to the moral observer; and a new or primitive people is a noble field of interest, until it is got by heart. Hence the charm of pastoral life to a man accustomed to cities; and the sweets of repose, to one jaded by the contests of passion. To youth also, which has all time before it, and all the world to choose in, and which, therefore, can play the prodigal with both time and the world, pleasure seems interminable, because ever seen through the glass of hope. O! its careless uncertainty is delicious! It gilds all prospects, and gives body to wishes; nor can the most successful certainty of after times, not even if it make a prime minister of a clerk, or a commander-in-chief of a private soldier, ever equal, in real happiness, that of the simple stripling who hopes all, and believes what he hopes.

"Where do you live?" said I once to an erect Irish boy of fifteen. "Wherever there are the best potatoes," was the answer. "And where sleep?" "Wherever there is the best hay." Such beings may roam unheeded and unheeding through pathless wilds, nor sleep the less sound because they know not where they are.

Not so with the veterans of the world, particularly if they have sacrificed to any great passion, and only fled from it as a relief, when its mischiefs pressed too sorely

upon them; as little with those high and honourable spirits, who are born to serve mankind by directing, and whose province it is, therefore, to live in the midst of them.

It is certain, the journey of our travellers to the Pyrenees, the sights they saw, and the life they led there, had opened a source of pleasure and of thought to them both, to which they gave themselves up at first with devotion. But somehow or another, this altered by degrees; and though Wentworth continued to admire the energies of Rivers, in the pursuit of his own peculiar happiness, his admiration began to be mixed with wonder that they did not wear out. De Vere, too, began to be ashamed, at having suffered that design which so tempted his free spirit when he left England, in favour of the Polish cause, to languish as it had done, even after his first object, that of soothing and restoring Wentworth, had been accomplished. To be sure, both Rivers, and Wentworth himself, had much shaken him from a resolution which, from the constant advices received from the north, appeared now to be Quixotish. But his inclination still bent that way, and his unwillingness to return to England remained undiminished.

In this state of abated enjoyment on the one part, and irresolution on the other, the month of October approaching, and Parliament definitively summoned for the despatch of business, both the gentlemen felt much excited by a letter, with the London post-mark, and signed "Herbert," on the outside. It was directed to Wentworth, who read it with avidity; and it contained many passages too applicable to our subject, not to be recorded.

"What you tell me," said the letter, "of the restoration of your health, and, in part, of your mind, delights me. Your way of life, too, and the scenes you describe, would almost make my old age romantic, and long to join you. But I fear I have too long preferred Homer and Thucydides, to Virgil and Ariosto; and the historical plays of Shakspeare, to Oberon and Titania, to hazard what I know would be a disappointment. The regions of fancy, indeed, are still charming; but

fancy is often as charming in the closet, as in the supposed realities of what she makes us dream. Shall I own to you, that your visit (if I may so call it) to Bolingbroke was far more interesting than your Pyrenees. All that you find there, proves that the 'real study of mankind is man.' Mr. Rivers is to be sure a wonderful creature; but he is at least a nondescript, and probably unique. Neither you nor De Vere are, however, like him, nor made to doze away life in useless imagination. You say he is happy; but his happiness is not, and cannot be, either yours or your friend's. He cannot direct the world, however he may the shepherds of the Pyrenees. I question if he could even direct the latter; for who does not know that shepherds once were conquerors and kings, and had energies which cannot be his? Upon both of you the world has claims. Your duty is concerned. And in regard to my friend De Vere, however we must respect those dispositions in favour of unhappy Poland, which animated him on leaving England, I trust I need not set forth to his good sense, the nullity, I had almost said the ridicule of supposing that his single arm (and that not an experienced one,) can do any good to a cause now universally despaired of. But were this not so, and with even a mere view to your own reputations, no talents in this country can sleep, and yet preserve command. The sword, rusty in its scabbard, is no longer a sword. The brightest diamond withdrawn from sight, is no longer dazzling. In its absence inferior stones begin to shine. Remember Achilles, during whose cessation Ajax filled the eyes of the Grecian camp.

"Perhaps I should not be thus urgent, or thus free, but for what I see passing here. Lord Oldcastle triumphs; of Lord Mowbray's catastrophe, you are, no doubt, informed; and Lord Cleveland says you are not to be feared. Yet the discontents are outrageous, and your absence during so much of the last session, has brought forward others, whom the ministers affect to estimate as at least your equal. It is said they court them, and even coalitions are talked of; and when your name is mentioned, the lip is pursed up, and it is asked,

in a tone I venture not to describe, 'What is he doing in the Pyrenees?' Depend upon it, secession, or even withdrawing from sight, never did good; and in times not pregnant with great events, the maxim of 'nobody is missed,' is but too well founded. But your teacher and mine has put all this in a light so infinitely more forcible than I can, that I must conclude with rather a large quotation:

'Perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright; to have *done*, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery.'

"Again,

'Time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his hands outstretch'd as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing.'

"Adieu! do not let the wisdom of Ulysses be thrown away upon you."*

In the present temper of Wentworth, this letter had almost the effect of a match laid to a train. He felt as strong and active in health as ever; and, during the rest of the day, few questions were asked but what concerned the distance and state of the roads to Paris. Both gentlemen were puzzled by the passage which alluded to Lord Mowbray's catastrophe; and De Vere, in particular, was filled with interest, and wished to return. But he trembled when he remembered the last winter, and thought prospectively of the next.

"It is not," said he to Wentworth, "that I am not alive to the President's letter, or that I am the Quixote he would so justly suppose me, could I fancy myself in my single person, born to restore liberty, where it has been abandoned by nations. If Europe allow this nefarious partition, individuals may blush for it, but can do no more. I am also moved to know what has been the fate of my uncle, to which Dr. Herbert alludes. But I have too little happiness, too little prospect at

* Evidently alluding to the fine speech of Ulysses in Troilus and Cressida.

home, to make me scan with much nicety, the chances of ultimate success to any cause I may embrace abroad. Your way is pointed out; mine is still to seek."

"And is not *my* way, *your* way?" said Wentworth, kindly.

"It would be, and willingly," replied De Vere, "should I ever recover my power of fighting by your side in parliament."

"You mean your influence at Wellsbury," said Wentworth; "but meantime, is there any thing to prevent your entering the lists through the means of others—with our powerful parliamentary connections?"

"Excuse me," cried De Vere, interrupting him. "If you are kind enough to mean that I may be returned through some great friend of yours, whose orders I must therefore follow, and whose opinions I must therefore consult; in short, through whose reflected grace alone I can be deemed even worthy of notice, such a seat I will never hold."

"Let us explain to one another," said Wentworth, mildly. "That you are made to follow in a train like Clayton, and add one more in the ciphers of the house, no one who knows you will suppose, nor will you believe that such was my meaning. But, however beautiful the contrary may be in theory, experience proves that to act through and with party, can alone confer the power of being useful. And if so, it is one thing to be brought into parliament because we are of a certain party, and a very different one to enlist in a party because we are brought into parliament."

"That is perfectly true," said De Vere; "but that it is possible to be turned out by him who brings me in, would paralyze me. No! in whatever I may engage, I must have the free use of my arms, nor ever fear the loss of them. I must be thoroughly *mei juris*, before I could feel that freedom of action, that dignity of independence, which could alone render me capable of serving a party, could I belong to one. With this, a simple vote, even unaccompanied by any other personal consequence than integrity, might do you service—without this, the best abilities, nay, eloquence itself is thrown away."

"Yet eloquence is sometimes commanding, always dazzling," said Wentworth, warming towards a gift with which he was himself so eminently endowed.

"I do not undervalue it," returned De Vere; "but after all that has been said of the insincerity of statesmen, and the venality of senates, I am not such a stranger to the character of my countrymen, as not to have seen that for eloquence to have weight it must be set off by honesty, and that an eloquent rogue is but an eloquent rogue after all."

Wentworth smiled, but De Vere went on: "Yes, with but little experience, I have yet made out that *character* is, upon the whole, what bears the English statesman through; at least, that character without rhetoric will beat rhetoric without character."

"I at least honour you for this," said Wentworth; "yet I am far from thinking that the independent votes which really make the statesman proud, are not to be found among those who follow a particular connection, or are only to be found where perhaps you only look for them—among the members for counties. As we are in the Pyrenees, and not in the atmosphere of Westminster, to you I may say it, that there is not only as much party spirit, but as much *prostration* among the greatest country gentlemen as the closest borough holders. I question if the country gentleman be not the greater slave of the two. The only difference is in the masters. For the county member crouches as much to his elector, yields his opinions, votes against his conscience as often, if not oftener than the little burgess who follows the patron of his choice: only in the one case, the independent, as he is called, has a thousand lords; in the other, but one. In proof of this, look at the county member, shaking for his seat towards the end of a parliament, and ask what is become of the pride and self-consequence that marked the beginning of it?"

"I fear this is but too true," observed De Vere, "but it interferes not with what I have said on the value of character."

"On the contrary," replied Wentworth, "it confirms

it; and I so entirely agree with you, that ambitious as I am supposed to be, the summit of my ambition is to rule through that character. This only can gratify the best pride of a statesman, and for this, if I mistake not, the state is preparing itself. There may yet be years of impurity to throw off, and of corruption to cure; there may even be a great crisis, and things may be worse before they are better. The Clevelands and even the Claytons may gain the upper-hand; but depend upon it, the time will come, nay, perhaps is not far off, when a first minister may find that his character will be as firm a support as his ability; when sincerity of heart and openness of manner may do as much for a Chancellor of the Exchequer, as his figures; and when a Secretary of State who promotes English interests, without being too tenderly alive to every brawl of the Continent, will govern with more facility than all the Machiavels we have ever heard of."

De Vere pressed his friend heartily by the hand at this speech, and pleased himself with the hope that it might be prophetic.

"I feel it here," cried Wentworth, putting his hand to his breast, "I see it in vision, though I may not live to know it in reality. The spread of knowledge and wealth must have its natural effect; the king will realize Temple's picture of the man of his people: and ministers, as you often wish, will govern for the people, and not for themselves."

Nothing could be more consonant to all the best hopes of De Vere; and his patriotism was delighted to find that a man, though a minister, might be patriotic; nor was the impression weakened, when Wentworth proceeded to say, that if ever he returned to power, it would be his pride to rally round him the best spirits of the country, without regard to the old arts of governing. "They must be young," said he, "and new to things, and not hackneyed in the trammels which Lord Oldcastle knows are ruining him, and yet has not the firmness to break through."

Then seeing De Vere's eyes sparkling with the pleasure which all this kindled, he very frankly asked if he

meant still to abandon him, and pursue an unknown path on the Continent alone?

De Vere allowed that he was much embarrassed; for he felt, he said, the cowardice of leaving his friend with such noble objects to struggle for alone, and then perhaps only return to share in his success.

"I shall envy even the satellites I have mentioned," added he, "who may have hovered round you, and witnessed if not partaken of your glory. But what efforts can be those of a man without arms, and against whom the tide of prejudice seems to have set among all his old companions?"

He was prevented from going on by the delivery of a packet which had been delayed, and which immediately absorbed him. It was from his mother, who after treating the account of the Pyrenees very differently from Herbert, concluded by saying, "I am, thank Heaven, well; but I am sorry to say your uncle breaks visibly to all who know him. He bears his mortification worse than I could have hoped; is full of fears for himself; and Constance has shut out the world during the whole summer, to shut herself up with him at Castle Mowbray. Her confinement has hurt her; exercise has been prescribed, and she often rides Beauty, which I have sent her at her own desire."

De Vere trembled with curiosity and interest when he came to these lines, which he read twice before he could proceed.

Lady Eleanor, adverting to one of the causes that took him abroad, as totally despaired of, in the minds of the most romantic, concluded thus: "Think not, my dear son, that this proceeds from a womanish fear, or a mother's anxiety. I tell you only the universal opinion in England. I speak not of those little spirits who think all ardour ridiculous which they do not, or cannot partake, but of all the best informed and least selfish, with whom I have communication. Believing this opinion to be the true one, I fear not any sinister motive within myself, nor being thought to act like an unworthy mother, if I tell you that Talbois languishes for its master, as I for my son."

This noble and affecting conclusion to a letter which was otherwise full of the deepest interest, revolutionized De Vere. His mother stood all before him, and the mere name of Constance on catching his eye, called the blood into his cheeks. It has been said "What is there in a name?" What is there not? Is it not extraordinary, that a few black marks on white paper, without coming in contact with any part of our bodies, shall be able thus to affect us? And can any man really think that the soul that can be thus affected, is a material machine?

De Vere was almost as decidedly, certainly as quickly changed by this letter, as Wentworth was by his. Poland was effectually banished, and Constance nursing her sick father, and shut out from the world during the whole summer, was the only object for which he had any vision, during his entire journey with Wentworth from Bagnieres to Dover.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EMBARRASSMENTS OF HIGH LIFE.

By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is weary of this great world.
You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet, for ought I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing. SHAKSPEARE.

So thought the Lady Constance, without (like Portia) consulting her waiting-maid; and she thought so, as we have seen, before the first winter of her introduction in the world was over.

We left her after endeavouring, in vain, to soothe her father in distress, under phantoms which his imagination had conjured up, but which were also dreaded by Lords Oldcastle and Cleveland; so all-devouring is the suspicion of the ambitious. In the earlier days,

Godolphin took the alarm, and prophesied ruin, at the sight of Harley's coach coming from Kensington. No wonder, then, that these watchful persons were tremulously alive when they were told by Clayton (whom they had sent there for the purpose,) that Lord B—— had twice supped with the royal party at Windsor.

The consternation did not end here; for a great officer of the Crown, whose attachment to the ministry had begun to be equivocal, and who was therefore, still more strictly observed, had actually brought into the very council-chamber the hat of one of the royal brothers, instead of his own, by which a secret interview at the palace had been detected; and what was worse, the officer, under so trimming a minister as Lord Oldcastle, was thought too powerful to be displaced. Lord Cleveland, who urged instant punishment, but without success, was so alarmed at this cowardice, that he sounded a *sauve qui peut;* observing, however, drily, that his character of a king's friend made it indifferent to him who in, who out. This did not diminish the misery of Lord Mowbray. In short, the whole afforded a useful lesson to an observer, upon the nothingness of ambition, when so little understood, or rather so abjectly pursued, as to fix its views on place as an *end*, not as a mean of glory.

Youthful and inexperienced as she was, to no one was this more obvious than to Constance; and, we may add, to no one did it bring more chagrin. Though composed of those elements which inclined her to filial reverence, even as a necessary part of her happiness, she could not shut her eyes to what (to say the very best of it) appeared the weakness of her father; and when he continued to complain of the world, and talked of evils which to her seemed so beneath the good and great, we will not say how shocked she was in her best feelings. Uneasy before, from she knew not what disappointments, this became downright distress. Ambition, as she saw it pursued, began to be hateful to her, and no object among all the brilliant prospects of her life seemed so desirable, as to separate her father, if she could, from the alliance he had made with men

on whom she willingly laid the blame of all the self-torment which he evidently suffered.

Poor, simple Constance! how wouldest thou have been laughed at in the world, if this little endeavour of thy natural heart had been known among the thousand flatterers that thronged thy brilliant drawing-rooms!—insects that enjoyed the dazzle of the minute, and thought all grandeur consisted in high-sounding titles or power, no matter how acquired, or at what price pursued.

But Constance was not one of these. Her own disposition, together with Lady Clanellan's lessons, and her aunt Lady Eleanor's history, had made her peculiarly alive to passing scenes; and the futility of most of them (any more than the extreme luxury in which she was immersed,) to produce the only end of our being—*happiness*. The death of Beaufort had been a shock to her which was even yet not worn out; nor could she help wondering at many of her young companions, who, after talking of it with emotion on one day, forgot it the next, and now only seemed to remember it as an event in history. This and the loss (though temporary) to society of such a man as Wentworth; and may we not add the separation of Mortimer from his friends, made her serious and uneasy, though decked with all the trappings of public show; and the heiress of Mowbray gave many a sigh under the jewels which nightly sparkled on her bosom.

If she turned from ambition to other interests, the prospect was still less exhilarating. She was still surrounded by suitors, many of whom might be lovers, and some of them worthy. But from most she turned, as actuated, if not by mean, at best by mixed motives; and even among those whose frame of mind she respected, she found not one who possessed that grace in disclosing it, that engaging compound of look, manner, and speech; in short, that nameless something, which interests we know not how, charms we know not why, and steals into our hearts before we are aware of it.

Constance might be difficult, and she had a right to be so; but it was not the difficulty of pride. On the

contrary, she had a soul formed for the gentlest impressions; as she well proved to those of her own sex whom she loved. In regard to ours, except in so far as an habitual interest respecting De Vere was concerned, there was an absolute void, and that void was not filled up by the number or variety of her admirers. Some of them embarrassed her by the splendour of their proposals; some teased her by their perseverance, and other affronted her by their pride. The Duke of Bellamont had long left her, piqued that his attentions were repulsed. Lord Cleveland was piqued too, and meditated revenge, which excited the energetic, and distressed the softer parts of her character.

She saw but one opening for relief either for herself or her father—a flight from London to Castle Mowbray. And this, with all submission, she ventured to propose.

But these were not times to remove so far, and the tremulous lord of that castle felt himself far from safe within its walls. Another castle, was, he thought, the focus of intrigue, and if he must leave London, he imagined that the air of Windsor was quite as good as Staffordshire. He indeed consulted the minister as his chief, and Lord Cleveland as his friend, upon the propriety of remaining all the summer within the royal atmosphere; and they both, very heartily, and we believe, sincerely, told him, they saw no necessity for it. But it was an ambiguous mode of expression; and the more active penetration of Mr. Clayton, had made his patron miserable by observing, that if the report was true, that a new arrangement was in contemplation, nothing could be more convenient for such views, than his absenting himself at such a time. Lord Mowbray, more and more assailed by fear, became more and more unhappy, nor did the abandonment of his own lordly castle, and the temporary occupation of an ephemeral villa at Old Windsor, at all diminish his anxiety.

In truth, Clayton was no more than right, though he knew not the extent to which he was so. The trimming politics of Lord Oldcastle, had met the same fate with most half-measures. Demands of a participation

of power rose upon him in proportion to his timidity; and he had become reduced to the question whether he should himself retire, or oblige some, at least, of his subordinate colleagues to give way to more active spirits.

Under this aspect of affairs, Lord Mowbray became ill; and Constance, who never stirred from his couch, had the misfortune to find all her little topics of consolation thrown away, because he could not understand them. On the other hand, Clayton was for ever in request, for ever passing to take account of the visiters at the royal residence, or sent on confidential messages to Downing Street; in the entangled replies to which latter, less tact than his own could discover, it was any thing but the intention to return an intelligible answer. The confidant himself, indeed, became alarmed, and did not spare his patron on that account. He had endeavoured to engage Lord Eustace on the former confidential footing, but to his surprise and dismay, found him cool, and uncommunicative. With the bold, overbearing (and so far open) spirit of Lord Cleveland, he was more successful.

"One and one only thing can save Lord Mowbray," said Cleveland, "and that through my interposition. The consummation of the alliance I have long sought, and which it is an affront beyond bearing to have so long delayed."

The alarmed confidant sought explanation, but was refused; and, what was worse, felt too much in the power of this haughty nobleman not to submit, as a vassal submits to his liege lord. Such is the slavery of the man who loses his freedom when he has lost his honesty.

Both Lord Mowbray and Clayton endeavoured to assume the dignity of persons ill-treated; both to veil their fears in resentment; but neither were fitted for it. A little spark of sentiment, indeed, excited the feeling of Clayton for his patron, when he thought of the proud station on which he might retire, and whence (had he only dignity of character) he might hurl defiance on his enemies. But when he turned to himself, none of these

consolations were to be found. To return to poverty and original insignificance, were his patron to drop—insignificance, too, made worse by having lost his early friends, was all the prospect which he had before him; and in this distress he thought there was nothing left either for himself or Lord Mowbray, but to renew the attempt to push on the alliance, still so devoutly pursued by the puissant Cleveland. The attempt was accordingly made, and in a manner to destroy the peace of Constance.

The unhappiness of her father amounted to desolation. He complained of the ingratitude of the world, the desertion of friends in his old age, the coldness of princes, and the hollowness of court friendships. One would have thought his lordship a Lord Derby, or a Duke of Ormond himself, except that those illustrious persons were above complaining.

Constance did all she could to give dignity to his sorrow, by fancying it well founded. But her consolations were not of a sort that suited the injured politician. She reminded him of his ancient descent and ample possessions, and the greater consideration which an English peer (experienced in affairs, and relying on no support but his own virtue) might enjoy, if he pleased, beyond all, or nearly all the common-place men of office who now filled the public eye, without commanding the public respect. She then drew a picture of the happiness which the holder of such a station might command, if he could only determine to enjoy the blessings that were his own, and not suppose there was that enchantment in the mere circumstance of office, which might be honourable or indifferent, or even disreputable, according to the condition by which it was held.

"You wish me then to resign," said Lord Mowbray, with a lip quivering between horror and contempt.

"I wish my dear father," replied Constance, "to assert his place: to live to himself, and laugh at the insolence or jealousies of little minds."

Alas! the mind to which this was addressed was not a great one.

"Pretty talking," said Lord Mowbray; "to resign, and strip one's-self of all consequence; to be left unnoticed by the minister among the common herd—a cipher without power—not even the means of providing for a menial dependant: Oh! Lady Constance, how little you know of the world!"

Then changing his tone to something like fondness, which delighted the affection of his single-hearted daughter, he told her, with many circumflections, (and hints rather than propositions,) that it was in her power not only to restore him to health, but to enable him to raise his head higher than ever at court, by only listening to Lord Cleveland's proposals.

Constance turned at pale this intimation, for it made her miserable, she said, to think how differently she and her father judged of this nobleman.

"Yet he has still the royal favour," said Lord Mowbray; "he heads the great party of the king's friends, and, by connection and influence, is the most powerful individual in the state."

"This may be all true," said Constance, with a sigh.

"Then what can be your objection?" asked the anxious earl. "To be sure he is somewhat older—"

"Oh! it is not that," said Constance.

"He may not be so handsome as many, but he has a noble air, and is more agreeable than most."

"It is not that," continued Constance, in more and more agitation.

"Then what is it?" cried her father; "he is devoted to you, and rich, and you would revel in the gratification of all your wishes."

Constance was startled to think how different were the notions of her father and herself as to these very riches; and, in particular, how little it had been hitherto in their power to crown her felicity.

"You hesitate, dear Constance," said her father. "May I not hope that your opposition has been more the result of an excusable coquetry, than aversion? If so, how proud shall I be of my daughter!—how quickly restored to health!

Constance was more and more distressed; more em-

barrassed than ever how to reply; but under such a misapprehension her presence of mind returned at once. She saw the mischief of reserve, and the necessity for instant explanation. Yet her heart was softened by even the little appearance of softness towards her, which the self-flattery of the earl, as to her decision, had produced; and when he took her hand, and she beheld his pallid cheek and faded eye, she could have almost fancied it possible to think of Lord Cleveland without disgust, and at least wished to think of him with less aversion. It was, therefore, with a tremulous voice, though not the less firm of purpose, that she said it was a most cruel misfortune not to be able to make her wishes bend to his.

"Oh!" said she, "were these wishes of any other kind, did they only regard my outward prosperity, fortune, power, rank in the world, how gladly would I sacrifice them all. But where my inward happiness is concerned; when every hour and every minute my self-approbation would be forfeited, in professing to love one whom I cannot even esteem!—honour, delicacy, and truth condemn; and my dear father, upon knowing, would be the first to oppose it."

Alas! how little did she know the parent in whose liberality she thus confided!

The shock this perseverance in refusal gave him, had an alarming effect upon his whole frame. Already unnerved, and suffering misery from even the ignoble ambition which governed him, he was tortured by the fear of losing that darling power, to which, in effect, all that belonged to him should have rendered him superior.

Recovering at length a little, and but a little, from a most alarming fit of agitation, he demanded of her if she had the least wish to preserve his life?

Terrified and distressed, she falteringly asked, what could make him doubt it; adding, that to preserve it, she would willingly risk her own.

"And yet," said he, "you refuse the sacrifice of what I must hold to be mere caprice; though the alternative is, as I feel it here (putting his hand to his heart,) to fix me in my grave."

Constance, overset by this cruel reproach, could not restrain her tears. She even hesitated, and the thought not merely of gratifying a parent, but of preserving his existence, operating upon her affectionate and gentle nature, she felt shaken, and was alive only to the sweetness of the rewards of filial duty. She looked with affection upon the face of her father, who, in his agitation, had rested his head on her bosom; forming a picture, which, prompted by other causes, would have been moving.

Under all his alarm, which was real enough, the earl felt the advantage he had gained; and thinking to complete it, he made a movement as if he would throw himself on his knees before his daughter, entreating, at the same time, that she would gratify him in this last and only wish of his heart; her refusal of which would, he said, send him to his death.

Afflicted, astonished, and wholly overcome by what she saw, the unhappy Constance could scarcely prevent an act which filled her with horror and consternation. It stupified all her senses, and shocked all her notions of decency and right. A sort of hysterical scream escaped her, and she implored him not to destroy her by such condescensions.

"At least," said she, falling on her own knees to him, "at least give me time! do not force a decision which, in making me miserable for ever, will not, cannot make you happy."

So saying, she bent her face on his hand, which she kissed, and watered with warm tears, the effusions of a struggle which almost broke her heart.

We will not say that her suffering did not affect Lord Mowbray; on the contrary, as he had always loved her as much as his nature would permit, he felt moved by the agony of mind which this contest had produced, and, trusting to the influence which he felt he had over her, he thought he might safely relieve her for the present, by granting the time for deliberation which she had implored. We do not know that he did this upon the principle, that "the woman who deliberates is lost," for Lord Mowbray had made few investigations concern-

ing the female character. He knew, however, that he possessed his daughter's love. He knew the tenderness of her gentle nature; and, above all, he knew her refined notions of filial duty. Trusting to them all conjoined, he hoped every thing from the proposed deliberation; and, with caresses which, on any other occasion, would have filled the whole heart of Constance with happiness, he granted the delay proposed, and left her full of hope.

Possibly no woman ever suffered a greater struggle from the same cause, than she did at that moment. Her aversion to Lord Cleveland was not confined to personal dislike; it was rooted in principle, and incorporated with all her best feelings. She saw at once personified in him, deceit, insolence, and the proud man's contumely: a heart corroded by love of self; a mind that shocked her by its contempt of all that she held most dear, or thought most sacred.

Gentle, generous, and modest herself, could there be any thing of that affinity between them which is the charm of married life? What was worse, could there be any thing that would not be a source of poignant misery? Oh! how different from that divine communion of soul which her fancy had sometimes painted; that mutual inspiration which translates every look into understood language, and every spoken word into kindness and affection!

Her aversion, therefore, was that of refinement to coarseness; of goodness to evil; and but for one thing death seemed preferable to such an alliance. But that one thing detained her long, before she could decide. Her sacrifice of herself might be the salvation of her father; the death of her own happiness, the life of his.

In such a struggle, passed the most unhappy day which Constance had ever yet experienced. She passed it alone, for her father had left her to seek Lord Cleveland, whom he endeavoured to sound on the state of the intention concerning him. Not even the assurance of expected success with his daughter could extract this from the wily earl, who treated him now as a tool, now as an enemy—never as a man who had a right

to his confidence. In truth he had been too often misled to give him the least credit; and except to practise upon his fears, he scarcely noticed him, more than to say he waited the decision, before he could even tell whether he could serve him or not.

Meanwhile, the cause of all this unhappiness in the one nobleman, and of moodiness in the other, found something like support and certainly in that firmness of character which we have attempted to describe; and after tossing in a sea of perplexity, her mind righted in the conclusion, that though she might put a force upon her inclinations, she had no right to sacrifice her principles. On this she built a final resolution to persist in refusing Lord Cleveland; but accompanied it by a determination to dedicate her whole life to the comforting and support of her parent, in every thing else.

Fondly, however, she clung to the hope that he would himself be alive to what pride and his station demanded of him, and rise superior to attacks which he might and ought to despise.

The event was any thing but consonant to the expectations of this natural minded but unhappy lady. Her father, furious from disappointment, was still more so from the recollection how much he had humbled himself to his child, and humbled himself for nothing; while the pure heart of that child was pierced through and through, to think that so dreadful a sacrifice of decorum had been made in a cause so little worthy.

They separated in agony. He, to brood on the degradation he feared he had incurred;—she to lament, in silence, over this unhappy difference, which filled her heart with unextinguishable sorrow.

CHAPTER IX.

FORCED RETIREMENT.

He hath forsook the court,
Broken his staff of office, and dispersed
The household of the king.

What was his reason?
He was not so resolved, when last we spake together.
SHAKSPEARE.

WHILE these minor parts were going forward in the drama of ambition, the more principal characters were hastening things to a crisis. Lord Cleveland, finding, spite of ten thousand manœuvres of Clayton's (who was indefatigable in messages between Old and New Windsor,) that his cause with Constance was utterly desperate, resolved to keep no terms with her father, whose office was demanded. Full thirty years' service, as Lord Mowbray called it—or sufference, as Lord Oldcastle designated it—could not preserve him. It became a fashion, indeed, to affect to abandon him. Jests were entertained at his expense, and the decorum of the court was almost disturbed by a very poignant one of Lord Cleveland's, which amused the ears of royalty itself. Some one, it seems, more compassionate than the rest, had ventured to deplore this usage of a man of such an illustrious family.

"Yes!" said Lord Cleveland, "'tis an illustrious family, no doubt; but, like potatoes, the best part of them are under ground."

The shock was too great for the falling earl. After having in vain waited for some compromise, and been apprized of the determination to remove him, he sent in his resignation, to avoid a harder fate. The court air then became absolutely pestilential; and being really and seriously ill, he at length listened to the voice of Constance (who now, all herself, showed nothing but alacrity and cheerfulness,) and resolved to retire from Windsor to Castle Mowbray. He did so, lingeringly,

but decisively, after waiting a fortnight for some consolitory message either from his royal master, or his former colleagues, which he seemed to expect, but which did not come.

It was now that he would have felt, if he could, the consolations of such a creature as his daughter. Her face was ever beaming, ever blooming. Her watchfulness was incessant, but never could her father detect a cloud on her visage, or a tear in her eye. We are not sure that her father himself did not exhibit both. It is certain that this disappointed man was agitated beyond bearing, as he lost sight of the majestic towers, and primeval oaks of Windsor, in the enjoyment of which he had so often revelled, and, indeed, entirely passed the last two months. It was in vain that Constance talked to him, read to him, or told him her own feelings upon the inanity of the life she had been leading, and the hope of a better, in living more to themselves where they were going.

Lord Mowbray shook his head in silent sorrow. The first day's journey was therefore mournful; and, even on the second, the cheerfulness of Constance was exerted with little better success. The spirit of Lord Mowbray seemed irrecoverably sunk; and in losing, as he fancied, the royal favour (which, however, the royal penetration had been much too just ever to bestow upon him,) he thought his sun was set never to rise again. He became fixed in melancholy; and when the great gates of his own noble castle opened to receive him, they seemed to be the gates of a prison, which were afterwards to close upon him for ever.

And here may we not indulge a lucubration upon the different appearances and effects of retreat, acording to the character of the person retreating, or the causes of his retirement? Many are the Lord Mowbrays of the world—weak in their career; weaker still, when forced to abandon it. But many also, who, from greater abilities, promised better things, have borne their reverses as ill. Cicero whined in banishment, and Olivarez sank under the terrors of a ghost. Bolingbroke, as we have seen, *wrote* beautifully of philosophy, but belied it in

practice. Walpole talked of a contentment among his beeches, which nobody believed; and Swift growled on in perpetual exasperation, and only relieved himself by painting Yahoos.

In truth, none of these were prepared to retire from power, any more than to retire from life; and as the soul requires to be disciplined and subdued by high and sublime thoughts, in order to be resigned and ready even for its unavoidable fate; so, high determination of character, philosophical habits, and the true appreciation of things, can alone preserve it unhurt and unruffled amidst the uncertainties of political events.

Strange, therefore, as it may appear, philosophy and the meditations of the closet, are as necessary a preparation for ambition, as a knowledge of courts or camps. Without this, difficult indeed will it be, after ill-regulated excitement, to court the valley, and fancy ourselves happy in the shade.

But there is a buoyancy of heart, which, supported by character, is incompressible. The mind retires upon its resources, and takes a fresh, perhaps a more vigorous spring, from being regenerated by leisure; and when it is so, can there be a more interesting spectacle than that of a high-charactered statesman, retired to fit himself for better things? All honourable interests may still be felt by him, and only what are sere and morbid need be pruned away. Thus every thing is sounder, every thing holier, and the soul proceeds in its advance to that state of goodness which must make its final retreat easy and happy.

We do not, by this, recommend to the enlightened, or even to the blind man of the world, "the hairy gown and mossy cell." What we *do* recommend is, the charm of philosophy, the physic of self-examination, and the advantages of *unfettered* reflection upon the past. Then, and then only, may we feel purified (as our age requires,) and then may be realized that holier vision of the poet,

> "Let thought unveil to my fix'd eye,
> A scene of deep eternity:
> Till life dissolving at the view,
> I wake—and find my vision true."

But Lord Mowbray was not one of these. As his soul had known but one bias, one energy (if energy it was,) his spirit died when deprived of its only food. His castle looked as proud, his forests waved as nobly as ever, but not for him. Even his daughter's cheerfulness, and her delightful soothing, were thrown away upon him; and she had the misery of seeing him so far from being consoled by seclusion (though among possessions which princes might envy,) that it even seemed to augment the source of his grief. "Of what avail are all these things," said he, "when they could not preserve to me the protection of the crown which I have served so faithfully, against the *treason* of my enemies?"

With this he sank deeper and deeper into melancholy; every part of his noble domain became indifferent to him; and the only moment of the day in which he seemed to live, was that of the arrival of the post. In short, but for letters from Clayton, whom he had left to watch over events, and which also soon became less and less frequent, no one seemed more completely forgotten.

The consequence was disastrous to his health, which had begun rapidly to decline; and he tore the poor heart of Constance to pieces, by giving her to understand, in return for the fondness with which she nursed him, that the whole of his suffering was owing to *her!*

Lady Eleanor had learned with grief the situation of her brother, and made every effort to be admitted a sharer with her niece in the task of watching over this sinking victim of mortification. But never could there be a worse consoler; for, of all in the world, his sister's presence seemed the most dreaded by Lord Mowbray.

"She is cold, and precise," said he, "and knows nothing of that world, from which, I suppose, she thinks she can wean me. Besides, she is the mother of a man who ——," here he stopped, and buried the rest of what he had to say in silent thought.

He was equally averse to another offer of aid from Lady Clanellan.

"Her *lord*," observed he, peevishly, "does not make the offer of coming. Why are these fine attentions only displayed by *women*? But no! the men know better than to throw away their notice upon one no longer in favour."

In this state of things, as he had begun to be seriously alarmed for himself, he thought it advisable to send for the sagacious Wilmot; who, on his arrival, found things ill, and not likely to be better; and to the eager inquiries of Constance, he was guarded, and even reserved. But his interest was all excited for herself: for much did he admire her; and when he found that one so formed to be, what he had often heard her called, the rose of the world, had lost all pretension to roses, and was in fact drooping under the weight of filial attentions, he used all his authority, as well as all the persuasions of friendship, to induce her to alter her mode of life.

His injunction in regard to exercise was obeyed; for which purpose, having then no horse that suited her, Constance wrote to her aunt for the loan of Beauty. This was instantly granted, and the park was often visited on this pretty favourite. But it was observed, that walking was still more preferred; though her walks were seldom extended beyond the dairy house, where she spent most of the time that she was absent from her charge. Here she too often fell into reveries, which brought any thing but the relief hoped for by Wilmot. There were recollections attached to this spot, which the present subdued state of her mind was by no means calculated to repress; and these recollections got hold of her in a manner greatly to affect her peace. For it was here that she had so often, and so sweetly conversed with the only man whom she had admired and thoroughly esteemed; and as, with all her endowments, and all the gifts of fortune, no creature seemed at this moment so much in want of support, so, no one seemed so qualified to give it as this very person. The feeling, we own, was not diminished by the knowledge of all that he had been doing, seeing, and almost thinking, during the summer; all which

she had learned from his own letters to his mother, which she had read with avidity, and remembered now with something like melancholy. The contrast, therefore, which she could not help drawing, between her present state of mind in this favoured spot, and that enjoyed when it was first created, made her too often visit it in sadness, and quit it in tears.

The expectation of a visit from Clayton, now, for the first time in her life, gave pleasure to Lady Constance; but, strange to say, it was not gratified. Post after post went by without any intimation of the time when he might arrive, and often without any account of what was passing in the scene Lord Mowbray had quitted.

The astonishment at this change in the obsequious Clayton, was equally great, though not so grievously felt by Constance, as by her father.

"Never did I imagine," said she, in her letters, both to her aunt and Lady Clanellan, "that I should be reduced to wish for a visit, or a letter from Mr. Clayton, as a relief. But how little do we know what is to become of us, or who is to rule under the passing hour!"

In her anxious solitude, these, and similar sentiments, got full possession of her reflecting though young mind. But the more she reflected, the more she became resigned to whatever might be intended for her by that unerring and mysterious Power, who gave her life, and might make her happy or miserable for purposes, always just, but always inscrutable.

The awfulness of these considerations, however, did not overpower, but rather improved her fortitude, by exercising her faith in the goodness of Him, on whom she thus relied; and in complete and pure submission, she found the relief which real piety always administers. Hence, in the very midst of her anxiety about her father, she at least felt restored to the exercise of her mind, and the free course of her heart.

The freshness and dusk of the evening was generally consecrated to these musings, which grew to be her fa-

vourite pleasure in her present mode of life. What a contrast to the unthinking and overwhelming dissipation in which she had lately lived!

And thus the dazzling heiress, who had moved no where but in a crowd, and reigned in all eyes, and almost all hearts, the queen of fashion and splendour in London, became, in the loneliness of a deserted mansion, a more self-sustained, because a more self-approving being, than when she was the arbitress

"Of midnight revels, and the public show."

But though restored to the enjoyment of her mind, and so far happier, this excellent young person was any thing but easy. She was distressed at seeing her father, not only, as she thought, sinking, but sinking from causes which brought not along with them the consolations of respect. Over this, therefore, she drew a veil, as close as her understanding would permit; and she listened eagerly to any surmises that could flatter her with the hope that the fate of Lord Mowbray was commiserated in the world. To this point, indeed, her information did not reach; but the letters of Lady Clanellan began to look as if there was an opinion that he had been ill-treated, and even betrayed by those he had most trusted, especially by Lord Cleveland and his now proclaimed friend and confident, Mr. Clayton.

This information accounted for the change of conduct and protracted absence of the latter.

The immediate moment of the disgrace of Lord Mowbray had been one of agony to Mr. Clayton. The coldness of Lord Oldcastle, during the interviews he had with him, as a go-between, had killed all his hope, and filled him with terror. His place under Lord Mowbray, of course fell. That given by Lord Oldcastle would, he supposed, follow; and his seat in parliament only became miserably embarrassing from not knowing how to vote. Should he still side with the government, he must sink under the meanness of his conduct to his patron; if with Lord Mowbray, and Lord Mowbray in opposition, he was infallibly proscribed by the government.

There was but one plan to extricate himself from this dilemma, which was to persuade Lord Mowbray, if possible, still to give his support to the ministers, or at least not to join the opposition; and the hope of success in this was very adroitly managed with Lords Cleveland and Oldcastle, so as to suspend, at least, the determination to expel him from his sinecure.

Nor was the task he had undertaken altogether so difficult. He talked of the dignity of not going into opposition out of resentment; of the high character for disinterestedness which Lord Mowbray might now achieve; as well as the possibility that such conduct might, sooner or later, bring him back to office. This latter topic was certainly cogent; and his patron thought with him, that it was but wise not to close the door for ever upon his return. In fact, Lord Mowbray remained neutral, and Mr. Clayton preserved his place.

But greater things were still in store for him, Lord Cleveland, one of whose most kindling objects was an extension of parliamentary influence, thought this an excellent opportunity to mature his designs upon the seat at Wellsbury; and as Lord Mowbray, by the help of Clayton, had ravished it from De Vere, so Lord Cleveland, through the same Clayton, might ravish it from Lord Mowbray. As there was no difficulty from the sitting member, a treaty was therefore the instant consequence, by which all Mr. Clayton's influence and services were transferred to Lord Cleveland, and protection promised in return. This not only saved him from all fear of final dismissal, but gave new life and vigour to his prospects; for Lord Cleveland, when with the minister, enlarged upon the advantage of possessing such an instrument of preserving Lord Mowbray's support, as a reason for fresh favour to Clayton.

Lord Oldcastle, who, we have said, was a keen observer, accepted the treason, but abused the traitor. Lord Cleveland, in reply, said he must take men as he found them; and with this convenient mode of reconciling things, favour was promised. As Lord Mowbray made no secret of his wrongs, or of his resent-

ment, men wondered at this. But they only wondered; and the machine went on.

It was at this crisis Wentworth and De Vere, after rapidly traversing France, landed at Dover.

CHAPTER X.

DISAPPOINTED AMBITION.

> His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
> Began to crack.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

How few have ever left their country or their home for only three months, and returned to find them unchanged? The course of events—fortune, reputation, health, the affections, ancient alliances—all are acted upon by time. Let those be happy and proportionably thankful, who, even after so short an absence, find all as it should be.

We may suppose how eager the travellers were in their inquiries after events at home, the moment they arrived at any source of intelligence. At Paris, the only thing they learned from the ambassador was, that Lord Mowbray had resigned, but still gave his support to government. At Dover they were informed by the newspapers that he was dying. At Rochester they found that Lord Oldcastle was in distress; at Dartford, that he was as firm as a rock. In London, Lord Cleveland had accepted a great dignity in the Household; and, in the Gazzette, Mr. Clayton was actually appointed to a considerable place under him.

How changed was the great city from what it had appeared on that soft and silent morning when the travellers quitted it. The interminable succession of passengers; the quick step of business; the cries; the roll of carriages, or doors besieged by battering foot-

men; the look of care exhibited by those who had been long in town, or of eagerness and curiosity by those just arrived, to attend the opening of Parliament; all this formed a marked contrast to the comparatively magnificent solitudes, and cheerful freedom of Nature, in which they had lately lived. It was equally so to the dead silence of those very streets which they had traversed at the dawn of day, some three months before.

Their feelings were as changed as the scene. A sensation of doubt, uncertainty, and disappointment, as to their immediate lot, or future prospects, hung over them both when they started, which left them, as we saw, far from cheerful. We know not that they were now more certain in their plans; but there was that degree of elasticity and eagerness about them, which a state of great, though undefined expectation always creates; and which, though the future may be dark and shadowy, sheds over the present, an excitement not unexhilarating, though not, perhaps, amounting to absolute confidence.

Whatever were their feelings, the green vallies of the Pyrenees, with their shepherds and Toyas, their crags and torrents, and François, and the man of imagination; in short, primeval life seemed entirely forgotten. Wentworth drove instantly to his club, eager to know what was passing; and De Vere, eager also about politics, but more still about the fate of his family, drove to Grosvenor Square. Wentworth found all he wished from his associates; and De Vere learned all he feared from Dr. Wilmot, who had called at Lord Mowbray's, previous to setting out to visit him once more.

"I do not like to alarm you," said Wilmot, after the greetings with De Vere were over, "but I should be wanting in fairness if I told you I did not fear the worst."

"And my mother and Constance?" said De Vere, in much emotion.

"They behave like angels," returned Wilmot; "and if it is lamentable for human nature to see how it may

be sported with for want of proper regulation, it is reviving and most edifying to see what it can do when raised and set off by real virtue."

"My mother, then, is at Castle Mowbray?" said De Vere.

"She is, and of the greatest use to her charming niece, by her exemplary firmness; though I fear, of very little to the poor lord, her brother; for, with submission, poor I may justly call him."

"And Mr. Clayton?"

"He is not there, nor has been. In truth, what should he do there? He could not save Lord Mowbray, or of course he would. And if so, who can blame him if he remains where he is more wanted?"

"I am sure I do not," replied De Vere, "and yet—but I prophesied it"—and he became much affected by the contending recollections.

At length recovering some calmness, he asked if he could do any good by accompanying Wilmot to the castle; for though his uncle had few demands upon his sympathy, he was indignant at Clayton, and full of tenderness towards his mother and cousin.

"To your uncle, I fear none," replied the doctor; "to your mother much—to Lady Constance, some."

De Vere felt eager at that little word *some*.

Not to lengthen this part of the narrative, the two gentlemen were quickly agreed; and De Vere, having made a slight preparation for the journey, was soon on the road to Castle Mowbray, with the friendly Wilmot.

During the journey he was informed of all that had passed in his absence; the tottering state of the ministry; their efforts to save themselves by new arrangements; and the consequent disgrace of Lord Mowbray.

"Forgive me, for calling it so," said the doctor; for, considering how he has borne it, it is the appropriate term; nor among the many cases of disappointed ambition which I have observed, and endeavoured to cure, have I ever seen one so dangerous, or so obstinate as this. After the most bitter and poignant grief, which

that angel, his daughter, could not assuage, he is now sunk into lethargy, and almost insensibility. If this go on, he will either die, or, what is worse, fall into second childhood."

De Vere shuddered, and expressed his astonishment, that one who had taken such little part in the real direction of affairs, and was in himself so independent as to fortune, should feel the loss of place so acutely.

"I fear we must not examine it," observed Wilmot; "for it is any thing but one of those honourable cases of illness, and sometimes of death, which are occasioned by an excess of sensibility to reverses, wherein the country has been the sufferer, as well as the individual."

"Have there ever been such cases?" asked De Vere.

"Why, yes; eaten up, as we are supposed to be, by universal selfishness, in our too advanced state of luxury, I have yet seen much spirits—rarely—but I have seen them; and the exclamation of 'Oh! save my country, heaven!' is not a mere supposition of poetry, to prove that patriotism may be the 'ruling passion, strong in death.'"

"Such cases," said De Vere, mournfully, and thinking much of the contrast which his uncle's bore to them, "must be really what you have called them—honourable. But how do you account for the same effects on Lord Mowbray, where the cause seems so inadequate, and when I fear I must allow, that his mind had not that reach of ability, any more than that elevation of ambition, which can alone, one would think, produce so much unhappiness?"

"To be disappointed," answered Wilmot, "in whatever we love, with all our heart and soul, corrodes both heart and soul, if unsheathed by philosophy, or, what is better, by religion. On the other hand, experience shows that the violence of a passion is by no means always in proportion either to the honourableness of its object, or to the apparent pleasure of its gratification. Let us not, therefore, blame Lord Mowbray too much, if his ambition was of that little sort, which is confined to little men. I mean mere court favour, or office

consequence. The famous Lauzun of Lewis XIV., you know, having laid down his charge of captain of the king's guard, could not bear to go to a review for forty years afterwards."

"Ridiculous!" cried De Vere.

"Well, then, take a more splendid, but scarcely more rational example:—the great Duke of Epernon, on being dismissed from his employments, used, in order to show his superiority, to traverse Paris with a train of eight hundred gentlemen. 'Nevertheless,' says an historian, '*au milieu de cet éclat extérieur, le chagrin de se voir éloigné des affaires le rongeoit cruellement au dedans.*' Neither of these grandees were much better than Lord Mowbray; and, however we may laugh at such little vanities, we know what they are in little minds. It is only for truly great, and self-supporting dignity, to feel alike superior to success or reverse. A character like this may really be said to be independent of the world."

"This is true philosophy," observed De Vere, "and worth all that all are struggling for."

He then fell into silence, and was much lost in meditating his own situation, past, present, and to come. In this, the share of thought he gave to the interesting personages he was about to see, may be imagined, and it seemed even to *his* firm nerves, as if something mysterious was hanging over him, which had a dark and indeterminate reference to his cousin, such as he could not pursue with pleasure but could not quit.

"It seems then," said he, (at last breaking silence,) "that she is the same unspoiled creature as ever; and though she has been assailed, she has not been hurt by the world!"

"And of whom may you be speaking?" asked Wilmot, with a good humoured but significant smile.

De Vere, rather embarrassed, answered with all simplicity,

"Why, of Lady Constance, of whom we were talking."

"We talked of her," said Wilmot, "above an hour ago, as we passed the towers of Kenilworth. The last

person mentioned was, I think, the Duke of Epernon, and the last subject, the insufficiency of little minds to support themselves under the reverses of ambition."

So saying, the sagacious, though friendly Doctor again fixed his eye significantly on his fellow-traveller.

De Vere felt as a boy when caught in a fault. He coloured, stammered, and looked out at the window. Recovering, he observed, "it could not be surprising that he should feel the greatest interest for his cousin under such a trial as awaited her."

"It will be a great one," replied Wilmot, "for she loves her father; yet do I not fear her; for never did I see such strong affections so tempered, or controlled by so much propriety and fortitude."

By this time they had arrived within sight of the towers of Castle Mowbray; and De Vere could not help recalling, with pensiveness, the last visit he paid to them, and his sudden flight from what he thought their ominous reception of him. The cold gleams of the figures in the armoury were still before him; nor was he relieved by a transition from these to the last and too formal reception given him by Constance herself. The thought of it made him uneasy, and he became agitated with unpleasant prognostications as to his present visit. All this could not escape the penetration of his observing companion, who, however, thought it serious enough to abstain from raillery. For this De Vere thanked him in his heart, and it increased his attachment to this excellent person, to a degree which never afterwards was forgotten. So powerful is often a very little circumstance; and so cogent a very small, but delicate kindness, shown at the proper moment, in fixing the opinion, and exciting regard for life.

CHAPTER XI.

A LESSON.

It is too late; the life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly: and his pure brain,
Which some suppose the soul's fair dwelling house,
Doth, by the idle comments that it makes,
Foretell the ending of mortality.

—SHAKSPEARE.

As De Vere's coming had not been announced, it was settled that he should ascend the hill of Castle Mowbray on foot, and leave it to Dr. Wilmot to prepare his mother and uncle for his arrival.

The carriage rolled on, but it was dark when De Vere approached the castle; and the many lights moving to and fro, as well as a sort of bustle among the domestics, made him think that a crisis impended which gave a shock to his heart. For though he had not loved Lord Mowbray, because his nature permitted no one to love him—though he had been even wronged and affronted by him—he felt that the approach of death was a great curer of wounded feelings; and the fear that this cure might be impending, banished every thing but sympathy. But when he thought of his mother, and the certain shock this misfortune would give to his cousin, he surrendered his heart to that impression alone; and, unable to proceed, he sat down upon a bench in the court-yard, waiting farther intelligence.

A thousand visions of the future were then conjured up to his raised imagination. He saw his cousin pressed down with grief for her loss; he saw that loss enhanced by the reflection (bitter to her mind) that it was occasioned by a sensibility to misfortune little enobled by its character; he saw her afterwards sole mistress of the ample domain around him: and in so far, elevated to a greater distance than ever from the secret, yet still preserved wish of his heart.

While in this reverie, the great gate opened, and a servant went forth with a torch, as he thought in quest of him, for he held it up as if to search all parts of the court-yard. De Vere therefore presented himself, and advancing to the guard-room was soon in his mother's arms, who withdrew him instantly to one of the side chambers.

She received him with all her usual affection, but was evidently under exertion to curb some strong emotion. At length, summoning all her self-possession, she said to him—

"You are come but in time to see your uncle die. The hand of death is upon him, and in one little hour the last Lord Mowbray will perhaps be no more."

"My poor Constance!" cried De Vere, surprised into an exclamation, which, before his mother, he had never yet indulged.

"Hope the best for her," said Lady Eleanor, "for her mind is prepared, and her resignation perfect. But my unfortunate brother! Had he her fortitude, he might possibly yet survive."

Lady Eleanor was here almost overcome by contending emotions; for though, as affecting her happiness, the personal loss of Lord Mowbray could not be great; yet, as a sister, a Mowbray herself, and a high-minded woman, the reflection of the weakness of this last of her line, who had succumbed to so trifling a reverse, was almost as cruel a wound as the loss itself.

"Is the event then nearly over?" said De Vere, much moved.

"I know not," answered Lady Eleanor, "but Dr. Wilmot has dismissed us, to watch in expectation of it, and says that a lethargy of four days can have but one termination. God's will be done!"

She then proceeded to inform her son of as many things as she could, in the short interval during which she permitted herself to be absent from Constance, who, she said, took his visit most kindly, and would see him when she could. She then folded him in her arms, and, what with the sight of him, unexpectedly restored to her, and the trial which still awaited her in

the sick chamber above, it was happy for her heart that it was made so firm.

On her quitting him, De Vere resolved to remain where he was, only sending word to Dr. Wilmot, that he waited his summons.

But the hand of death was now upon its victim, and that so heavily that nothing could extricate him from its grasp. Wilmot saw this, nor pretended to that skill which could minister to a mind diseased, "wherein the patient must minister to himself." Lord Mowbray's malady was in the heart; and all his bodily complaints, consuming as they were, were only symptomatic. The symptoms might be removed for awhile, but (the disorder uncured) they would infallibly return. This Wilmot had expected; for, from the few conversations which the earl had been previously able to hold with him, he found that his memory was still among the scenes and persons where it always had been, though his tone about them was altered. Soon, however, this sank, if not into lethargy, into a brooding silence, which was worse. He sat whole days, seemingly lost to his daughter, his sister, and himself, with a fixed look, from which nothing could, for a long time, rouse him.

Constance, though wrung with grief, never succumbed; and her active attentions, and the medicines of Wilmot, so far succeeded, that he revived from this first attack, and for some days became comparatively active. He even said he would read, and tried to divert his thoughts with history. But history brought him back to politics and courts, and he threw it from him with disgust. He then called for works of imagination; but having no imagination of his own, he could little enter into that of others, and peevishly pronounced them to be fit only for children. Constance then proposed some of the lighter, and afterwards the graver moralists. But these he said were mere theorists who had never known the world they taught us to dislike. Lady Eleanor at last, with some distrust, but also with some hope, placed the Bible before him, and to the delight of Constance, and herself, he seemed disposed, for some days, to embrace it as a study.

"This will do," said Wilmot, to whom it was communicated, "if it last. Cultivate it by all means."

They did so; but what was their grief to find that he soon became cold and lost to the subject. He turned over the leaves with a glazed and lack-lustre eye, and it was evident that he was not able to comprehend, still less to remember, any of the comforting truths which he had read. The only result was a feeling that he was stupified.

In fact, the whole Bible was so new, and so totally the reverse of all that had ever been his study, that the most sublime images were lost, the most consolatory passages thrown away upon him. His thoughts wandered back to the world, like Plato's grosser spirits to the charnel-houses, where the bodies they had inhabited, were still lingering. Like them, he was not even fit to be improved, and though separated from his old habits, he could not live without them.

"The Scriptures," said he, "are not a fit guide to men who have known the world."

In a little time, all notion of a diversion to his thoughts from reading, was given up, and he relapsed into fits of longer and deeper melancholy, of which the worst apprehensions began now to be entertained. These were confirmed by Wilmot, who endeavoured to rouse the attention of his patient, in vain. Once, and once only, he almost succeeded; but it was only for a moment, though that moment was important, and showed what the ruling thought had been. Wilmot having tried to rouse him, by all the exciting topics he could think of, at last mentioned De Vere, as desirous to pay his duty to him.

"I cannot see him," murmured the startled earl; "but tell him to put no trust in a minister, because he may have betrayed another for his sake. Tell him that Clayton is a rogue, and that *I* myself am——"

The unhappy nobleman could get no further, and, turning on his side, the little fire which this exertion had kindled in his eye, was spent, and he relapsed into a silence which soon became eternal.

Luckily for their own peace, neither Constance nor

Lady Eleanor heard these last words. They would have been a knell never to be forgotten. To Wilmot alone were they uttered, who only revealed them to De Vere, and then buried them in his own heart. They proved, indeed, that conscience, as well as disappointment, had had a share in hurrying on his fate.

Upon the news being communicated, Constance uttered no cry, and shed no tear. She had been so prepared, and resignation had been so habitual to her, that she at least experienced no paroxysm, though she felt much mental grief. On her knees, in her closet, her soul poured itself forth, and she felt supported, nay, even raised. On the second day, she had the relief of tears, that bath and balm to pent-up minds; and Wilmot, who had staid on purpose to watch over her, thought he might quit her, after advising her instant removal to Talbois with Lady Eleanor. To this not merely change of scene was an inducement, but the many irksome but necessary acts of business which she was forced to witness. Her situation itself, of sole representative of her father, made these more personal; and she gladly availed herself of the offered assistance of Mortimer, whose proximity of blood seemed to authorize it, and whose undeviating and delicate attentions in the most minute particulars, saved her many a bitter moment.

Little do those know, who have never felt the misery of losing those they love, of what value these attentions are, or how much anguish is spared by them to the sufferer. Never can we be too grateful for them; for, of all kindnesses, all generous, all friendly acts, the soothing hand stretched to our assistance, under mental wo, is fullest of healing, and most eagerly caught at.

Just so was it with Constance, in her feeling towards her cousin. She did not see him till the day after the event had taken place; when, softened to a tenderness she had never before shown, she gave and received an embrace from him which thrilled his heart.

"How good of you to come! but you were always so!" was all she could say. Enough, and more than enough, to fill him with extacy; for had the empire of

the world been offered him to forego the delight of those honied words, we may safely say he would have spurned at the offer. Their effect upon him impressed her still more with his sympathy; for, what with his real feeling for her situation, what with the joy which this indication of her resumed kindness occasioned, he could not restrain a burst of emotion, which showed itself in many tears. It was a sympathy which Constance felt home, and never afterwards forgot.

CHAPTER XII.

DECISION.

Belike she thinks that Proteeus has forsook her.

Now by the honour of mine ancestry,
I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE first month of the mourning of Constance was passed with her aunt in the privacy of Talbois; during which, Mortimer had taken order for the numerous things that needed attention at the castle. He had, as nearest male relation, in the quality of chief mourner, attended the funeral of his uncle, which was as private as the rank and consequence of the deceased could admit. Indeed, except by Lord Clanellan, whose regard for Constance, and Dr. Herbert, whose respect for the De Vere part of the family, prompted it, only some neighbouring gentlemen attended. Not one of the former political associates of Lord Mowbray made either offer or inquiry; which, considering all things, can scarcely move our wonder. But there was one omission which was at least unexpected by all who knew not the truth. Mr. Clayton, however, was not to be blamed, if he was not seen at the grave of the man

who had made him what he was: a duty which we are to suppose him to have been extremely anxious to fulfil; for he actually wrote to De Vere to ask permission to do so, and was refused.

"I expected as much," said Lord Cleveland's new confidant. It is really hard that one should be prevented from showing one's attachment to the memory of an *early friend*."

The world admired these sentiments; nor were the world wrong. The sentiments were good; and if Clayton concealed the fact, that when he made the offer, he knew there was that between him and the Mowbrays which would prevent its being accepted, how was the world to make the discovery?

Lady Elizabeth Partridge, and the Misses Partridge, (who had put on full mourning for the *earl*, though they had, ever since his retirement, talked of him only as their foolish old *relation*,) went so far as to say this was very pretty of Mr. Clayton, and very unkind of Mr. De Vere. This, however, was after the opening of the will, to which Lord Cleveland, as the nearest male relation after De Vere, and Mr. Partridge, as the husband of Lady Elizabeth, had been invited. Neither of the latter persons found themselves so much as mentioned, any more than Clayton; who, however, declared, that although his patron had often told him he should be handsomely remembered, he entirely *forgave* it.

The will, indeed, was of some years' standing, and, except the sum of five thousand pounds to Lady Eleanor, left Lady Constance sole inheretrix of all the testator's property with Lord Clanellan for her guardian.

Lord Cleveland and Mr. Partridge immediately returned to town, coolly observing, that it was not worth while to have called them so far on such an errand. Lord Cleveland, however, openly expressed his disappointment that the Cleveland part (no inconsiderable one) of the Mowbray fortune, had not been made to revert to the Cleveland name, in his person. This was, in fact, an idea on which he had long dwelt, not only within his own mind, but on all public occasions that

warranted the mention of it. So that, on his return to London, he every where spread the failure of his just expectations, and gave himself the air of an injured man.

All eyes were now turned, more than ever, to the great heiress; who, however, was too secluded and too much occupied by her recent loss, even to know how great a space she filled in the world's curiosity. Though she had reigned a whole season in the *beau monde*, her character was by no means yet understood. She was, indeed, thought the most *difficult* of young women, Alas! poor Constance, she thought not of difficulty; she only wished to be let alone. Much of the blaze that had surrounded her had been, owing to her father, instigated by Cleveland for political purposes. From that she was delivered, and could, at least, now indulge the plan of life most agreeable to her own views. At present, indeed, the seclusion of what she called the dear forest, seemed the only life suitable to her frame of mind; and a visit from Lord and Lady Clanellan in their quality of friends and guardians, seemed all, or nearly all she wanted. But, except for a few days, to give her an account of her affairs, establish his house in the comforts necessary for her reception, and to receive Lord Clanellan, Mortimer came not. Yet, although there was no ostensible cause for his absence, his mother did not seem to wonder, much less to complain. Still it was matter of surprise to Constance, that he should thus, without apparent reason, absent himself from his only home.

The sensible heart, and high mind of De Vere had, indeed, sustained a perilous contest on this occasion. His love for his cousin was, perhaps, higher than ever; but the jealousy, we may say, the romance of his pride, rose in proportion. The misery was, that he was not sure he was right; and as there was now no secret about it with his mother, he consulted her.

"To doubt," said she, "is to decide. If you are uncertain, let the decision be on the side of honour."

De Vere staid away.

But a reason for his absence was now luckily supplied

by Harclai, who, to use his own expression, laid violent hands upon him, and carried him to visit his tenants at Wellsbury.

It may be remembered, that in the ancient map of the borough, a considerable portion of land appeared once to have belonged to Mr. Okeover, now transferred to Mr. Flowerdale, a gentleman whom we hope the reader has not forgotten. Indifferent to borough politics, Flowerdale had not rejected an offer made by Lord Cleveland's steward, for the purchase of this land. The steward said it was an agreement; but this was denied by Harclai, who now acted for Flowerdale. But whether agreement or not, Harclai refused to fulfil it, and at length appeared in the shape of its legal owner himself, under a regular deed of sale from the quiet but right judging squire of Okeover.

In truth, from the moment Harclai had made the discovery of Flowerdale's possession in Wellsbury, and that the sale to Lord Clevsland was not completed, he bent all his endeavours to avail himself of the good will that had arisen between Flowerdale and De Vere, to transfer the interest of that estate to his friend. For this purpose he introduced himself at Okeover, and made good his claim to be considered the representative of Mortimer, whom he found so high in Flowerdale's favour, that the bare opening of the treachery he had met with, determined him to close all negotiation with Lord Cleveland, and dispose of his land where it might contribute to redeem the right, not be perverted to defend the wrong. As De Vere was absent, and as Harclai knew he could not afford to buy, to prevent delay, he made the purchase himself, and greeted him with it upon proper securities, as soon as possible after his uncle's death.

This activity of Harclai, gave a blow to the Clevseland party in the borough; and thus, the plainness and apparent parsimony of his life, was made to tell in the cause of friendship. For it was by this parsimony alone that he was enabled to lay by hundreds per annum, which were almost all dedicated to generous purposes.

The freeholds thus acquired were all the votes that

remained in the borough, above those of the two parties that now divided it; and they gave a balanced, if not a preponderating interest to De Vere.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOPE.

I see some sparkles of a better hope,
Which elder days may happily bring forth.

SHAKSPEARE.

The affairs of the borough, thus opportunely urgent, furnished a fair pretext for that absence from his home which, for the reasons we have assigned, had been resolved upon by the master of Talbois. But another plea arose out of the service of Lady Constance herself. The marquess, in his quality of executor and guardian, had complained much of want of information respecting the fairest parts of her inheritance, situated in Yorkshire. Here she possessed the great mansion called Cleveland Hall, which took its title from the hills which surround it. It had not been visited for ages, that is, from the time of the death of old Mr. Cleveland, the last owner who had ever resided there. It was this gentleman who had settled these estates upon Lord Mowbray, who was his grandson by his only child, the former countess; and Lord Mowbray, having ever found even Staffordshire too far from the royal atmosphere he was so fond of, had never once visited the place after he came into possession. Consigned entirely to stewards, there were many things that wanted explanation and rectifying, which nothing but a disinterested eye could effect, and as it was far from convenient for the marquess to go in person, an offer which De Vere made to accompany his solicitor, on behalf of his cousin, was gladly accepted, and richly repaid by the manner in which Constance seemed to feel it.

On approaching the hall, Mr. Blagrave, his fellow-traveller, told him that he must not expect much comfort where he was going. "For not only," said he, "it has not had a gentleman for its inhabitant for near fifty years, since your great grandfather died; but, with proper respect be it spoken, the tradition is, that Mr. Cleveland himself did not live too generously. Indeed, we are told that it was by the most pinching parsimony that he raised these estates to the immense value they now bear, forming, by much, the largest part of the Mowbray fortune."

This account of the solicitor was realized on their arrival at the house; for it was perfectly true, as he had represented it, that even in Mr. Cleveland's lifetime, it had scarcely exhibited a less desolate appearance than it now bore. It should seem, indeed, even then, that it had been the prototype of those descriptive lines of Pope on the mansion of a miser:

> "Like some lone chartreux stands the good old hall,
> Silence without, and fasts within the wall;
> No rafter'd roofs with dance and tabor sound,
> No noontide bell invites the country round;
> Tenants with sighs the smokeless tow'rs survey,
> And turn th' unwilling steeds another way;
> Benighted wanderers the forest o'er,
> Curs'd the sav'd candle, and th' unop'ning door:
> While the gaunt mastiff, growling at the gate,
> Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat."

But, however inhospitable, this long-neglected mansion was not only the best, but the sole head-quarters the travellers could find, as there was nothing like an inn within many miles. At the same time, from having given some days' notice, the interior was not totally destitute of comfort, and the *dis*comfort De Vere made light of, for the sake of her whose service he was upon. But his mind was far from happy, and his letters to his mother at this time, describe his feelings so particularly that we cannot help giving an extract of one of them to the reader.

"We arrived at dusk, and, as the weather was warm, were rather surprised to see what seemed to be a splendid light through some of the windows, and still

more to find that it proceeded from large wood fires, which had been kindled in the rooms we were to inhabit. But we were soon reconciled to them, and condescended with a good grace, to what, though perhaps an evil at this time at Talbois, was here a blessing to all but the swallows in the chimnies.

"I write to you from a magnificient, abandoned and gloomy bed-chamber, with a state bed in it of green cut velvet, which I thought my great grandfather could never have procured with money. Mr. Blagrave, however, assured me he had so much pride mixed with his penury, that he had no doubt he purchased it upon some lucky speculation in the South Sea. Be this as it may, the chamber is half ruined, half furnished, and vast and cold; as much so, in these last respects, as my hopes. It was certainly not a place for a hopeless man to come to; and yet I have something to relate about it, which a century or two ago, might have impressed me with I know not what divinations. The thought of the advantages which my journey may procure to her for whom I undertook it, bears me up; but except for this, I could not find comfort in this place. The very extent and magnificence of the property, only seem to increase my distance from *her*. It is quite extraordinary my uncle should never have visited what may be rendered flourishing beyond all thought. But the place itself is half ruined from neglect, and the first evening seemed ominous to me, in the frame of mind I was in. Leaving my companion to give the necessary orders for our accommodation, I walked through a long line of neglected garden, from twilight till dark night; or at least it was only lighted by the stars, and I really invoked the 'woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom accorded with my soul's sadness.' In this solitude, *her* perfections were more than ever impressed upon me; but so was my despair. To think of these estates, added to those of Castle Mowbray, made me more alive than ever to the failures of my late endeavours to achieve, what, I am not wanting in friends to tell me, I have too many wayward notions to accomplish. In short, it seems the height of madness to hug

this delicious passion still to my heart, when, as long as there is this distance between us, no power on earth shall tempt me to disclose it.

"But hopelessness in love is not the only one I feel. The plans designed for me by my uncle have failed, I will not say from what causes: satisfied that *you* do not lay them to the account of an improper pride. They have failed, not only without substituting others in their places, but, by making others too late, have rendered all abortive.

"Such were my thoughts during my walk, protracted till the damps of the evening; the recollection, however that I had abandoned my companion in this lone place, drove me in. I sat down with him at supper, and rather envied him an appetite, which seemed not the less for the total want of care. Whether it was his civility, on seeing me still abstracted, or sheer fatigue, at so cheerless a companion, he soon left me alone; and I retired to the gloomy state bed-room I have mentioned, where, little disposed to sleep, I abandoned myself to the same thoughts which had so lately occupied me in my walk. And very appropriate were they to such a place, all about me seemed to exhibit an abortive attempt at what could not be accomplished; shall I call it an unfinished, and, therefore, an abandoned commencement, of what was intended to be magnificence, but had failed? 'Fit emblem,' said I to myself, 'of what I thought to be, and what I am;' and I looked at the velvet hangings, which clothed a deal worm-eaten bedstead, and an immense chimney, meant to receive marble columns, for which, however, bricks had been substituted. Upon the sides of the room too were the same marks of unexecuted purpose, in compartments of the wainscot, made for pictures, but which had never been placed there, while their spaces had been covered with old paper.

"The mood this generated, did not add to the cheerfulness of that I was already in. I, who had always been such an idolizer of hope, began to despair. I thought of the many things which had been said of my once adored deity, by the observers of the world, and

they did not inspirit me, 'Yes,' said I, as I walked the gloomy half furnished chamber, 'Feltham was right, when he said that Hope 'often fooled us with silken delusions,' and Halifax, when he called her 'a kind cheat,' and observed, that 'she was a bad guide though very good company.' Then, recollecting what I had felt two summers before, and what I was now, I agreed with the quaint but wise chancellor, that 'hope might be a good breakfast, but a bad supper.'

"This mood was so strange and desponding that I am afraid you will be ashamed of your son; and I should perhaps be ashamed myself to record it, but that it is an introduction to the sort of wonder which followed; such it was to me, think of it as you will. For after betaking myself to bed more for form's sake than any thing else, and being kept completely awake with these thoughts till the early twilight dawned, I grew restless, rose literally with the lark, and to refresh myself, sought to leave my chamber through a door which the servants had told me, opened upon the garden. I did so, and pursued a weedy walk, conducting me to a labyrinth of yew, which had been clipped, but was now so entirely overgrown, that it added to the difficulty of the maze.

"In fact, I thought I was lost, when I found myself suddenly standing before the statue of that very identical Hope, with whom I had so recently quarrelled.

"The figure was not ill executed, and she was surrounded with all her emblems. One arm was extended, with a finger pointing to an opening almost imperceptible, which in fact turned out to be a path leading out of the labyrinth: the other rested on her anchor, and held a scroll, on which, with some difficulty, I read—

'In Hope, a hynge doth goe to warre;
In Hope, a lover loves full long;
In Hope, the merchant sails from far;
In Hope, just men doe suffer wrong;
In Hope, the ploughman sows his seed;
Thus Hope helps thousands at their need.

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Then faint not, heart, among the rest,
Whatever chance, Hope thou the best.'"

Such was one of the letters of De Vere to his mother, which he concluded, by owning that this singular accident had elevated him for a few minutes, as if portentous. Nor laugh at him, reader, for the visions which seemed either to depress or raise his fancy. There are moments, when the best of us clouded by disappointment, and uncertain of the future, especially when in solitude, and abandoned by all but heaven, catch at that future with hope, or let it go in despair, according to our temperament, though alike unaccountable on any rational grounds. Let the puffed up man, proud either of his wisdom or prosperity, remember this; nor despise De Vere for either this temporary depression or causeless elevation.

But the neighbourhood of Cleveland Hall afforded another discovery to De Vere, more substantial than a mere emblematic statue, however agreeable. In returning from a distant manor, through the village of Kirkharold, he stopped to view the ancient school-house, a picturesque compound of gable and cornice, in the most quaint taste of the days of Elizabeth.

Struck with its antiquity, he entered by a pair of old gates, now almost off their hinges, into a great court before the building, new laid with greensward. Here he saw a gentleman and his servant, measuring a circular sweep with a chain, and a lady, of uncommon elegance of shape, seemingly giving directions. He would have retired, but what was his astonishment on the gentleman turning towards him, to behold Rivers! Could he have doubted it indeed, all doubt was ended when he came nearer to the lady, for there was no mistaking the pensive eye, and clear dark beauty of Zerlina.

We may suppose their mutual pleasure, and mutual surprise, though Rivers seemed to have less of the latter than his friend.

"How good of you," said he, "to find us out so soon, and in such a wild sequestered spot; more hid, and less in the track of life than St. Sauveur itself."

De Vere expressed his joy at the meeting, but professed his utter ignorance of the meaning of these last words.

"Why, I wrote to you," said Rivers, "the moment I arrived in England, which was only ten days ago, to tell you what brought us home, and whither we were bound."

"Your letter then is still at Talbois, where I have not been this fortnight," said De Vere, "and the chance of my finding you here is the most surprising thing in the world."

"I am sure, then," replied Rivers, "I may say the same; but come into our venerable hermitage, where they are preparing tea for us, and tell us by what adventure (for I see it is one) we are brought together."

De Vere protested the adventure must be all on his side, for there was little romantic in visiting an estate on behalf of a relation who had lately succeeded to it, and could not visit it herself.

"No more," said Rivers, "than that a gentleman should take possession of a house he has purchased, which, in truth, is also the business which has brought *me* here."

This produced mutual explanations; and it turned out that Rivers, true to his character of acting upon sudden and strong impressions, upon reading the English newspapers one day at Bordeaux, where he had wandered down from Languedoc, saw, among the sales advertised, the old school-house of Kirkharold, with its little domain of garden and field. "Mrs. Rivers will tell you," said he, "that I changed colour upon reading it; for in truth it had been the paradise of my early childhood, having been the first school I had been at till I went to Winchester. I knew and loved every tree and bush without, and every casement and cornice within. I could reckon up to exactness the number of pannels in this oak parlour; and the play-ground there where I let those ragged boys and girls continue to revel at present, is not more known to them than it was to me. In short, our earliest are our sweetest associations; my heart thrilled at the thought that this dear

old place might for a very little money, be mine. Zerlina wanted to see England, and, to tell you the truth, I was a little tired of France, and so—"

"You made the purchase," said De Vere, "and posted home on the wings of *imagination.*"

"You have hit it exactly," replied Rivers.

De Vere rejoiced, not merely for his own sake, for he thought, if ever his cousin visited Cleveland Hall, how happy she would be in such a companion as Zerlina. He mentioned his hope of it to the latter, and described Constance so glowingly, that Mrs. Rivers' imagination was kindled to a degree worthy her husband's in the prospect of such a friend—a prospect afterwards most happily realized.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTENT.

I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take it to be too little for people to enter.

SHAKSPEARE.

BEFORE he left Yorkshire, De Vere also made another acquaintance, which, as a picture of happy resignation to an apparently inferior lot in the world, we cannot help describing, though it led to no results of consequence to this history, except that best result of enlarging the number of those whom, for their qualities and virtues, we respect,—always a lasting and a real gain.

The little donative of Kirkdale in this remote Cleveland, had been given by Lord Clanellan, its patron, to a Mr. Fairfax, the friend of his youth at college and afterwards occasionally in the world. It amounted to barely one hundred and fifty pounds a year, some glebe, and a very small parsonage, the very reverse of that romantic Dovedale where Archer sighed out his

discontents. It had a garden, indeed, and a mountain stream at the bottom, which Fairfax often watched, applying to it the beautiful moral strain in the description of Denham:

> "Hastening to pay its tribute to the sea,
> Like mortal life to meet eternity."

That Fairfax should find delight in such applications, lets us enough into the character of his mind; but it would take long time to describe the effects of his practical virtue upon the circle (homely indeed, but not uninteresting) of his rustic neighbours. Cleveland was not a district where many gentlemen abode; and so remote and wild was this part of it, as to appear a back settlement of England; so that the residence of so kind and civilized a being as Fairfax, was a real blessing to its rough inhabitants. They found it so in its influence upon their religious habits, their morals, and their softened manners, and repaid it by a personal love, which the great ones of the world, amidst all their splendour, are too often without. No one indeed knows, who has not witnessed it, the immense value of that modest, but respectable character, the parish priest. To think him paid by his stipend, is mockery; but he is richly so, by the genuine love, and well-earned deference, shown him by his flock. Fairfax was one of these parish priests; and, unlike Archer in his ambition, would not have exchanged his humble, but self-sufficing lot, for all the reputation, and even all the expectation of a court-chaplain.

And yet he had a fine mind, many of the acquisitions of learning, and even the flowers of literature. So much so, that he had often been a kind of study with the marquess, who used to prophesy that his humble satisfactions would not last, but give way to something more exciting, from being more polished. They did last, however, spite of temptation.

"When you go to Cleveland Hall," said the marquess to De Vere, in London, previous to his journey,

"try to find out a Mr. Fairfax, the vicar of a village among the hills, called Kirkdale. He has puzzled my notions of human nature, though, to be sure, these cannot be very extensive, or very profound, which have been formed chiefly upon what I have seen at St. James's or the common routine of life. But, in truth, he *has* puzzled them; for his total want of worldly ambition does not arise either from ignorance or apathy: on the contrary, his stores are large, his tastes good, and his feelings active. So much so, that not many years ago, I thought I could not do better than to try to procure him as a tutor for my nephew and heir, and at the same time as an agreeable companion for myself."

"And could this fail?" asked De Vere.

"You shall see," said the marquess: and he took from his scrutoire the answer which Fairfax had returned to his offer. It was in all the freedom of their old college-habits together, which indeed had never been remitted.

"You tempt me," said Fairfax, "from my coleworts and my gooseberry bushes, and propose to me a higher lot in the ease and comfort of your house, the elegance of your table, and, above all, in your own society, and that of persons fitter for me, you are pleased to say, than the uncouth people I am among; and all you ask in return, is—what I allow would be a pleasure—that I should superintend the improvement of your nephew. Charming, on paper! but will the picture be realized? Can it be so? As to elegance, you know, I admire it. But I enjoy it here. A clean cloth within doors, and a turf walk without, with roses which your garden cannot exceed, satisfy my love of elegance as much as all that an upholsterer can do for *you*. Then, as to your table, what can it supply which my beans and bacon will not equal? Your good friends indeed. But will they be good company to me? Will they look upon your nephew's tutor as having a right to mix with them? Will *you yourself always* do so? Shall I always have liberty even when alone? May I lounge out of doors at will, seek the lark in the morning, or the thrush at night-fall? And if the evening be mild,

may I stray I know not whither, or wander I know not where, and yet return unwatched, unblamed, be sure of a good-humoured welcome home, and find an honest smile to wait upon me at supper as I do here? To be sure, that supper is only milk, or a little fruit and clear water. But so to me would it be if I were with you; only yours would, perhaps, be served in silver, mine in earthenware. Upon the whole, then, excuse me, if with a grateful heart for your offer, I respectfully decline it."

De Vere was charmed with this letter. It suited the then disposition of his own mind; and, from his ill success in opening a prospect of fortune, he was not ill pleased to think that a man of fine feelings, with a mind fit to be the companion of Lord Clanellan, could find happiness among coleworts and gooseberry bushes. His visit to him, therefore, was not delayed.

He reached Kirkdale at least in a pleasing moment, to view both itself and its pastor. It was one of those evenings after the glow of the day was over, when Nature, seemingly set free, sheds sweetness from garden, field, and wood. The birds sang gladness after hours of silence, and the whole hamlet smiled after labour done. De Vere found Fairfax under an elm at his door, conversing freely with two or three of his parishioners, simple folk, who were moralizing on the advance of the season. One of them, at the moment he came up, while leaning on his hoe, had just observed, that he thought it impossible for a man to be what he called an "*ateist*." De Vere afterwards thought much of Lady Elizabeth Partridge and her daughters, and that whole set, in comparison with this homely reasoner, who was a sturdy old man, who never stirred from his own hills, and yet presumed to talk religious philosophy.

Upon the approach of a stranger, the group dispersed, wishing their vicar good night with heartiness, which was returned with kindness, when De Vere presented him a letter from Lord Clanellan.

He was instantly received with respect and pleasure by Fairfax, whom he found, as he expected, plain, sen-

sible, moderate, and unaffected. His establishment was small, being not married, and a garden labourer, and housekeeper, all the servants he had. Nor had he much society equal to himself. There were always, however, one or other of his parishioners, waiting on a bench near his house, to obtain his advice, or a little kind notice, which to them was a gratification for the rest of the day. His books, his glebe, and his garden, and rides through the wide lying population of his parish, as they demanded his attention, amply filled up his time; and though fond of more cultivated companions than he had, he was not miserable for the want of them. He had, without losing his own resources, lowered himself to their simplicities. "They have not, of course," said he, in answer to De Vere's inquiries upon the subject, when they got more acquainted, "any polish of mind, but their hearts make up for it. I have not myself any great knowledge of the world, and it is true, as my noble friend sometimes says in his letters, my name will never be known. But *why should it be known*—and to *whom?* To mortals like myself? I am known to the *Immortal*, which is preferable; and he is better known to *me* from being seen through a vision, free from the distractions of the world."

Not a word of this was lost upon De Vere, who, long after he returned from Yorkshire, remembered this unlooked for picture of humble, but happy independence, and remembered it always with comfort, under struggles and temptations in very different scenes.

CHAPTER XV.

A TRIAL.

Alas! a kind of godly jealousy
(Which I beseech you call a virtuous sin;)
Makes me afeard. SHAKSPEARE.

On the return of De Vere from Yorkshire, after giving an account of his mission to the marquess, he passed some days in the tranquillity of Talbois, only varied by an excursion to Wellsbury, whence his party seemed daily to increase; and in the midst of the hopes and plans which this seemed to create, he received a memorable visit from his friend, the President.

It was asserted by Harclai that this visit was political, and that the President had brought a woman in his hand. In part this was true: for many were then the portents in the atmosphere of politics, similar to those which were so awfully sung by the poet, as belonging to the atmosphere of nature, when the sun—

"In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change,
Perplexes monarchs."

The specious eloquence of Lord Oldcastle could not conceal the danger to his power, occasioned by his timid and vacillating policy. He had employed the means to strengthen it which had usually been resorted to by most of his predecessors; he had addressed himself to the great families, made the crown rain influence, and endeavoured to buy off the most active of his opponents, by offering them any share they pleased of what alone he supposed them to aim at—place. But he knew not the men he had to deal with, nor, from the school in which he had been bred, did he know that ambition might be a patriotic and generous, as well as a personal and self-interested passion. He knew not that there might be other motives for aspiring after power than the mere love of it. In particular, he knew not the real charac-

ter of Wentworth, when he went even so far as to offer to vacate the government, and form a new one upon terms of sincere equality. Wentworth replied, that his object being a total change of measures, he could hardly expect it without a change of men. That to do all for individuals, and nothing for the country, would only bolster up a sinking cause; that that power was most secure which was founded upon public opinion, and that minister most a friend to his king, who carried with him the support of his country. Wentworth held that the public were an honest public; and their representatives, with all their defects, honest representatives, whose reason, fairly appealed to, would fairly decide; but, kept in the dark, and misled by false pretences, there would be no end to the efforts, to say nothing of the mean arts, necessary to influence their support. He added, indeed, that if Lord Oldcastle would acknowledge and act upon these principles, he would have no objection to act with him; but he owned that, from their very different opinions upon the science of government, he had little hope of that cordiality of union which alone would make a treaty between them advisable.

Lord Oldcastle received this answer with alarm, mixed with something like contempt. He said to his confidants, that Mr. Wentworth was a warm-headed visionary, with no more knowledge than a child in the art of governing, and totally ignorant of the character of his countrymen, who had too little virtue themselves to be so elevated in the scale of political existence; that public opinion was a good thing, could you come at it; but that private views, passion, and faction, for ever prevented it from being really known, and he therefore knew no where else to look for it except in the majorities of the two Houses of Parliament.

It was clear that statesmen who so widely differed, could never come together. The treaty ended, and meanwhile the administration had been so constantly changing, and in a crisis which required the utmost wisdom there had been so little stability, that the sovereign himself, who had the most truly British heart in

all his dominions, felt and deferred to the more liberal policy of Wentworth.

In truth, England itself was changed, though so insensibly, that hackneyed politicians had not discovered it. The amazing spread of improvement of all kinds, in knowledge, in wealth, in real independence, (different from the turbulence of earlier times, but in so far, only more to be respected) had made its inhabitants a new people, while the ministers of those days still governed that people as they would have governed the old. The long reach of mind, the genius, and the daring of Wentworth, had discovered this; it was seconded by his heart, and in that heart he had fondly conceived the character of a patriot minister. It must be owned, that in this he went before the age; but we owe it to him, that with all the usual cries of faction which have been raised against succeeding ministers, the characters of public men have been wholly changed; and that for many years we have been governed with a purity, a disregard to self, and a sincere attention to the public weal, which, while they make high-minded ambition still more honourable, would, half a century ago, have been thought Utopian.

The principles and objects of Wentworth were the delight of Herbert, and he had been perpetually exciting De Vere with their developement, and their praises. "I have long known and admired them," said De Vere, "but I have been spoiled of my arms, and can give him little support till I recover my rights, if ever I can fairly recover them at Wellsbury."

In his zeal, Herbert proposed to Wentworth that room should be made for him among the seats of some of his great friends. "He will never accept it," said Wentworth, and related the denial which he had himself experienced.

The death of Lord Mowbray had altered many things; and as he had possessed parliamentary influence to which his heiress would succeed, the President not unnaturally looked to that quarter as the obvious means of placing De Vere where he longed to see him, by the side of Wentworth. "The battle, and the hoped-for victory are impending," said he; "it will be too

late, or at least not so creditable, only to join the standard when it is won." In order, therefore, to further these views in regard to De Vere, Herbert determined to betake himself to the Lady Constance, and avail himself of the respect which she felt for him, and the intimacy which she so evidently desired to see him cultivate with her.

Of the parliamentary friends of Lord Mowbray, one who had long been in a bad state of health was expected to die. It was in order that De Vere might succeed to him, that the active Herbert determined to lay his case before his cousin; and to obtain his sanction for this proceeding was now the object of his visit to Talbois.

To Herbert's astonishment, when he opened the matter to De Vere, in their walk by the canal, he met with a determined refusal. "It is not," said De Vere, "that I am not alive to its advantages, or that I do not agree with you in thinking, that, where the obligation springs out of an interest so purely of a family nature, there can be little onerous or embarrassing. But there are reasons, there are personal feelings in this matter, of which I alone can be the judge, and which impel me, even imperiously, to avoid this kind interference."

Herbert deplored this inflexibility. "If it arise from independence of spirit," said he, "you are too rigid. Lady Constance is now the head of your mother's family; and heads of families only consult their own consequence, in surrounding themselves by relations as their political supporters."

"Lady Constance," said De Vere, "is no politician; and, if I know her, will not become one."

"The greater the necessity," replied the President, "for putting herself in the hands of a man of honour. And who so fit an adviser as her nearest male relation?"

"A husband," said De Vere, firmly enough, "and in that case, who is to foresee the changes, the interference, perhaps the overthrow, of all we might have counted upon? No; if my cousin ask my advice, however little qualified, I will give it; but never will I profit by it to benefit myself."

Herbert called this romantically unbending, and com-

plained that De Vere had abandoned him for the school of Harclai. He even attempted to banter; but it was a subject, as connected with his cousin, too delicate for the doubting heart of De Vere, not to put down the attempt at once. He indeed could not help saying, with some seriousness, if not stiffness, that there were things of which one's own feelings could alone be the judge, and on which the best friends might make unfortunate mistakes.

Herbert eyed him with surprise, but seeing that he was assuming that air of lofty determination, which every year became more and more prominent in his character, he feared that there was some deeper principle of action concerned in it than he would be able to shake; and with his usual tact he desisted from the attempt.

Returned to the house, however, he betook himself to Lady Eleanor, and set before her, as forcibly as he could, the danger to his fair hopes which might attend De Vere, if he pushed this impregnable spirit too far. He avowed the design of his visit and its failure, and observed that there was not a noble house in the kingdom which did not govern itself by the maxims he had recommended. Lady Eleanor heard him with composure, yet seemed to share the pride of her son. "It would seem strange," she said, "if De Vere were to act under the standard of a woman, however free; but when the power of that woman was liable to be transferred to another, she could not help thinking the decision of her son was right."

The President supposed from this, that the matter had been already settled between the mother and son; and he took his leave, in all friendship, though perhaps a little piqued. He had been so used to see persons of all ranks and ages defer to his opinion, that, to say the least of it, he felt disappointed; and being lofty enough himself, upon being afterwards requested by Lady Constance, on the advice of Lord Clanellan, to make this very offer to De Vere, he declined all interference with persons who had, he said, their own feelings and principles of action.

"I know not what this means," said Constance to Lady Clanellan, in some uneasiness; "but I fear this Mortimer of ours is prouder than we imagined."

This was said while expecting a visit from him at Castle Mowbray, where he had been invited by Lord Clanellan, for the express purpose of deliberating upon the plan of action to be pursued by Constance in regard to her political influence. For the event expected had happened, the seat was vacant, and she had already been besieged, either in her own person, or through her guardian, with applications from would-be successors of all descriptions.

Had she been less a subject of sorrow, or known as much of the world as she did in later times, she might have been even amused at the various developments that were made to her. By some honest blunderers, terms were offered which must not be mentioned; by others who thought they disguised things better, political creeds were stated, professing to be explicit, but from which any line of conduct might be pursued in almost any event. Whigism and Toryism, court and country, king's friends, and people's friends, all made proposals; and inexperienced and averse as she was to be thought a party woman, so various were the principles of the applicants, that one would have fancied Lady Constance had been of all the parties of the state. In the dilemma occasioned by this crisis, Mortimer arrived.

Spite of his pleasure always at seeing her, there was, about this time, fast gaining upon him, a formality of manner which, however unintentional, he was sufficiently conscious of, as well as that he could not prevent it.

The pleasure of Constance at seeing him, was checked by this manner, and she was embarrassed, besides, with the project she had in contemplation of bringing him where his friends most wished to see him, without appearing to oblige him. In truth, though there was no formality in *her* manner, the evident constraint of her cousin's demeanour had been in a degree caught by Constance herself; and though her heart overflowed with good will, though she felt even grateful to him for a thousand mute kindnesses, which were not the less felt because they were unblazoned, it is certain that she had not now that buoyant and happy frankness towards him which had characterized their earlier ac-

quaintance. But not on this account had he the less occupied her thoughts. On the contrary, the seeming mystery of his conduct engaged most of the attention she could spare from the contemplation of her late loss. He had lately avoided her: she knew not why; yet his sympathy with her situation, and his attention to her interests and comfort, had been all, and more, perhaps, than even a brother could have shown. On the other hand, it should seem that she was the last person in the world from whom he would accept of obligation. This was, to say the best of it, strange; and it had formed the subject of many a silent reverie, which had been any thing but discouraged by the seclusion of her life.

These reveries had become habitual to Constance, and under a different impression in regard to her cousin, they might have ended in a comfort she much wanted. Bereaved of the protection of her parent, and of the interest which even his stiff, cold character, could not banish from her heart, her thoughts wandered wide, in search of a resting place. Her fortune and pride of place did not seem to afford her any. Grandeur she had tried; and though not averse to it, and still less to the charms of elegance, of which she was indeed herself the type, neither grandeur nor elegance had been able to fill the void which she felt in her heart. While her father lived, and so many interests were created by the task of giving him comfort, this had been the less felt. But he was gone, and with him that authority, her deference to which had weighed with her so much in altering her former behaviour to her cousin. The world indeed!—but she was out of the world—and in it, she knew not one, no, not one, whose high, yet respectful bearing, coupled at the same time with easy cheerfulness, had conciliated so much of her regard or esteem, as that of Mortimer had done.

But while her heart told her this was but true, something else whispered her that her heart had no business with it. Mortimer had shown every sort of anxiety for her interests, but none for her favour. He had even seemed to shun her; and when forced by situation to be in her presence, was no longer that delighted and delightful cousin, who had so often amused the playful

hour by vivacity, and the serious one by something better. Constance was not made to throw away her kindness; but her gratitude for his services, if they might be so called, and her esteem, (amounting to admiration,) of his character and manners, kept him much in her thoughts. She could not help, therefore, feeling sad when she surveyed the beautiful park which Castle Mowbray overlooked, and thought of the contrast which its now vast solitude exhibited, to the same scene in the preceding year.

But though she could not feel what may be called tenderness towards a man who seemed so little anxious to court it, yet, as her relation and friend, no feeling forbade a deep interest in his welfare. It had therefore become a favourite occupation with her to form plans for his advancement, as much as she could, without compromising that modest pride of character which always belonged to her.

"Yes," said she, "I wish to serve him if he would let me, and if I could do so without—" she could not go on; and though she often got thus far in these soliloquies, for the life of her she never could finish; and she would fly to music, or Lord and Lady Clanellan, to dissipate her thoughts.

Lord Clanellan, however, saw no harm in these wishes, when they transpired, as they sometimes did; and when he had ascertained that it was her desire that Mortimer should be not merely consulted, but requested to represent the political interests of her family, he immediately proposed the visit we have mentioned, for the express purpose of arranging a business always so important, and which might prove so critical.

In doing this, Lord Clanellan was actuated by a principle very different from that which governed most of the political men of his day. As he was the general supporter of government, and as De Vere's attachment to Mr. Wentworth was perfectly well known, it seemed but the mere natural course of things, that Lord Clanellan should make use of his influence, as trustee for the property, which gave the power to return a member, by naming one who would support the people in place. Nor had representations to this effect by Lord Oldcastle and others been wanting.

But all were without success. Lord Clanellan, however singular in the opinion, did not think that in politics, as in war, every advantage was fair. With a delicacy, therefore, as well as justice, peculiar to himself, he left the whole matter to be decided by his ward, with the assistance of her family, in the same manner as if she had been of age, and her legal rights already perfected.

De Vere, on learning this, was quite enough aware of the code which usually governed the morality of party, to be exceedingly impressed with this liberal conduct of the marquess. It was not that to a mind like De Vere's such a decision seemed surprising. But perpetual struggle had so blunted natural feeling upon these points, and general practice had so reconciled honour to what in other cases it would have rejected with disdain, that had the conduct been different, it might have perhaps been excused. He therefore openly expressed his admiration of Lord Clanellan's liberality, while Constance, who heard him, thought it the most natural thing in the world.

"And yet," said De Vere, "my cousin may live to think differently. At present, she is but a young party-woman."

"'Tis an odious distinction," said Constance, "even if it were not far above my capacity." Then glancing at a pile of letters before Lord Clanellan, "Here are things," continued she, "which puzzle—some which even frighten me. One talks of 'the march of public opinion;' another says, I can prevent the *ruin* of my country, and one offers me money."

Both De Vere and the marquess assured her that she had a great deal to learn, as well as to unlearn, if this frightened her; and that there were ladies who would envy her more for this one advantage of political influence, than all she possessed besides.

"And do these understand the march of public opinion?" asked Constance.

"They would at least be affronted to have it questioned," said De Vere.

"And save their country, and take money?" continued Constance.

"That we must not say," answered De Vere. "But though they might not take gold, they would revel in power; and hence, when there is real influence, there is no female character that fills the eye so much as a female politician."

"And this, Mortimer, you wish me to become?"

"Not so, indeed," replied De Vere. "I would as soon see you take your seat in the House itself. But having this influence, Lord Clanellan has done rightly, as well as honourably, in calling upon you to use it."

"Heaven knows," observed Constance, "it is neither my wish nor my taste to do so; and I would gladly leave it to those of my sex who, you say, envy me this possession." Then, changing to somewhat of a mournful tone, she added, "I am sure I know not why, for it never gave happiness to him who is gone."

It was evident she was thinking of her father, and De Vere eyed her, as he always did under these soft impressions, with an interest which all the dazzle of her beauty, set off as it was by the grace of her manner, could not of itself alone command.

Lord Clanellan, however, now brought the conversation to a point, by observing, that though he had affected to leave his ward free as to the party she should support, it had only been a subterfuge; for that in effect he had used all his power and authority as a guardian, by proposing a name to her. De Vere hastily asked "who?"

"Yourself," said Lord Clanellan. "But as I am to know nothing of your politics or plan of campaigning, it will best become me to leave you to yourselves; only," added he, with a laugh, "recollect that as *I* am a general supporter of his majesty's government, I may be accused of treason if you are too factious."

"So saying, this right thinking nobleman withdrew, in order to leave the cousins more at ease in the discussion which he naturally thought would follow.

De Vere was wholly unprepared for any thing so personal. He had come, expecting a mere general discussion. In a moment he found himself involved in the very question he most wished to avoid.

Nor was the embarrassment of Constance less. Her

guardian, it is true, had saved her from the appearance of having made an advance to her cousin; but a thousand little alarms, from what she thought the awkwardness of her situation, could not help showing themselves; and thus the two persons who esteemed one another most in the world, seemed most afraid to enter upon a very plain question.

De Vere broke a minute's silence, by observing how very delicately her guardian had behaved.

"He always does so," said Constance, "and I am fortunate that with such friends as himself and the marchioness, and such relations as my dear aunt and you, I may be relieved from what I see would otherwise be too much for me."

"Few would think it so," said De Vere; but it is not every one who is only more modest for being much distinguished. May I ask your feelings as to the line of policy which you wish your parliamentary friends (whoever they may be) to pursue?"

"Whoever they may be, Mortimer: I thought that had all been settled, and that you would be good enough to relieve me from a burthen for which I am not fit."

"Always feminine, always delightful," returned De Vere; "you will never move out of the province of your gentle nature. But at least you must have some bias: I will not say any *personal* wish as to party, but some opinion as to the men you think most capable of serving the crown, by preserving the country."

"That is a deep question," observed Constance, giving a melancholy smile, "for one so left." And she looked at the mourning which she still wore. De Vere thought she never looked so perfect, while she went on: I certainly can neither love nor esteem Lord Oldcastle, and still less Lord Cleveland. But for them, perhaps *he* would be alive," (and she gave a deep sigh.) "I am also free to say, Mr. Wentworth has all my esteem, my admiration, and were wishes therefore to decide, they are all for him. Nevertheless I am sensible, (and it is the only political reflection I have ever made) that private wishes ought to have nothing to do with public conduct; and if you and the marquess will really make me talk of things I so much dislike, I know there

ought to be other reasons than wishes. I have also another feeling, and that a deep one."

Her cousin entreated her to continue.

"I am fearful of myself," proceeded she, hesitatingly. "I thought my poor father so ill used, that I should question my own heart's justice, were I to wish ill too Lord Oldcastle."

"Excellent, admirable Constance!" exclaimed De Vere, "you will almost make me love a female politician."

"You will soon retract," continued Constance; "for you will pity my ignorance when I tell you I have no more to say, except that I think Lord Clanellan is so good, that the cause he supports cannot be bad. Perhaps I may add, that in my love for the good king, in which I have been bred, I am puzzled to know how it can be so loyal to oppose ministers whom he approves."

De Vere smiled a little. And here let us own that we give these speeches, rather out of our attachment to truth and nature, than from any commendation they afford of the political knowledge of the speaker. In fact, they must appear to all who are politicians, and to many who are not politicians, perfectly silly. But not so to De Vere, who showed his cousin that she might be mistaken, but loved her for being so. He observed to her, that Lord Clanellan, being one who gave a general support to all governments, reserving particular questions, he could not be said to be of any particular party. He also satisfied her, from the nature of the constitution, that loyalty to the king might sometimes be even best evinced by opposing his minister. "But God forbid," added De Vere, "that your other repugnance, drawn from the questioning your own heart on Lord Oldcastle's usage of him who is gone, should ever be disturbed by me. 'Tis a feeling too honourable to the pure nature of my cousin, not to be held for ever sacred. Keep it therefore enshrined till you pronounce your own acquittal; and I will only add, that never can you have a purer judge."

"You make this too serious, Mortimer," observed Constance, (and yet his words were very sweet to her;) "I have told you my feeling about myself, because I

felt bound to do it; but this ought not to influence *you*, on whom I would gladly disburthen myself of a weight to which I am not equal. Nay," continued she, seeing him rather moved, "you are not obliged to me; so check your thanks if you please, for it was my guardian that suggested it. But even if I had proposed it myself, think not that a De Vere, my aunt Eleanor's son, could ever be any thing but free as the air."

She said this in some agitation, for she feared, from certain indications of countenance, and half expressions, that Mortimer was about to refuse the proposal. Nor was she wrong; for, to her disappointment, and almost dismay, with a thousand excuses, and as many thanks, and murmurs about obligations, mingled too with a tenderness, as well as admiration in his looks, which came from a deep struck heart, he lamented the impossibility of profiting by her intentions.

Constance was astounded. She had expected another result—she had hoped relief from him; hoped for his guidance, hoped a thousand things which she could not well define, but in all which she was now disappointed.

At length recovering a little from her surprise, she said, "And is this the end of all? Am I to be left still without guide or help? And does my cousin, as well as my guardian, abandon me? This is indeed to be an orphan!"

And with this, from we know not what mixed feeling (it was certainly not mere disappointment, on the immediate subject,) she let fall a tear, which she hastily brushed away, as if ashamed of it.

De Vere was disconcerted, he was grieved and agitated at these emotions of his cousin, which seemed to tax him with ingratitude—at best with ungraciousness; and he felt peculiarly the allusion she had made to her orphan state. The usual effect too of beauty in distress was felt doubly by a heart not only generous in itself, but altogether devoted.

He could that instant, instead of persevering in his resolution, have willingly thrown himself at her feet, confessed his love, and though she rejected it, implored her to command him as she pleased.

But he was a man of high purpose. He was endowed with no *right* to *direct* her conduct; and, therefore, he felt painfully, that though for a time they might act together in principle, still he should hold his power of acting not from himself, but from another, and that other, a woman, of whom it might be supposed in the world, that he had taken advantage. But above all, he felt that the time might come, and come soon, when another of still more consequence might appear upon the scene, clothed with an authority which would supersede him in a moment, throw all his hope into shade, and crush alike his ambition, and his love.

These thoughts re-assured him, and the spirit of independence resumed its empire. It might be jealousy, but if it was so, it was a

"Jealousy
Which sometimes savours nobly;"

and could the mind of Constance herself have beheld the struggle of his, it would assuredly have approved the determination which had so distressed her. How to explain it was the difficulty. Yet he felt that explanation was necessary, or that he might be set down as cold, or even sullenly indifferent to the interest of the person whom he so loved at that moment, that, had it been required, he could have died for her. He attempted to take her hand, which did not seem as if it would be refused, for the feeling of Constance was not that of resentment. But here again he checked himself. At length he exclaimed, "I know not what has come over me, but I feel far from being my own master, and least of all can I explain to you, my cousin, my motives for a conduct, which yet, left unexplained, must make you judge ill of me. And yet," continued he, hesitatingly, "I think you too noble in nature to do this. You will assuredly require more proof than mere appearance, before you condemn me."

Lady Constance answered not a word.

"I think, I say," proceeded De Vere, with increasing agitation, "my cousin is too just to suppose I would decline what is so honourable to myself, and what might be even thought a duty to her as the head

of my mother's house"—But he stopped again, and Constance, thoroughly surprised, and in some little alarm, asked him if he was ill.

"Too ill in mind," answered he, "to make known to you half my feelings upon this subject. But you will think me proud, (as you have sometimes done before) if I tell you what fetters me: and pride towards you, dear Constance, must vanish in the proudest."

"And yet, cousin Mortimer," said Constance, gravely, "this does not appear; if, after all, your refusal of what my guardian has thought it right to ask of you, proceeds from this wayward feeling."

"I explain myself ill," answered he, "and am distressed that you should think so; for, could I hazard my sentiments, you would not yourself disapprove them. They are even such as I am sure you would yourself entertain, were our situations reversed. I cannot, therefore, doubt their propriety."

Constance felt pleased with the delicacy of this insinuation, though it only made her more interested to know his reasons; and as she was frankness itself, she did not hesitate to tell him so.

"Frankly, then," said he, they are merely founded in a common prudence, unwilling to encourage hopes which must, from their very nature be disappointed."

"Hopes! my cousin!" exclaimed Constance, and a faint blush came over her, while looking at him to discover his meaning.

"'Twas a wrong word," cried he, in a hurry of anxiety; "one that belongs not to the subject: and I ask ten thousand pardons of myself as well as of you, for having used it."

Here he strode several paces along the room, apparently to recover himself. Meantime, having resumed a collected air, he approached her once more, and with some solemnity, continued thus:

"What I mean, is this: to be entrusted by the heiress of Mowbray with the management of her political influence, could only do me honour; while to be looked upon in my own person as the representative and adviser of my delightful relation, would give a charm to my life which would really ennoble it. To act in such

a service would render the service of my country a thousand times more sweet; but to do justice to this proud situation, would require that which I do not possess. It implies an equality, a freedom from control, a consciousness of power derived from one's self alone, which would not be mine. But I own, it would require other and more important securities, which it is not only impossible for my cousin to give, but which it would be dishonourable in myself to think of, and against which, therefore, it would be my most imperative duty to take no precaution."

Constance looking more and more surprised, he went on, "My meaning is, that the authorized rights of another might, and no doubt *would*, soon put an end to mere delegated power."

Constance, who had hitherto listened with the deepest attention, and seemingly not displeased, here hastily interrupted him. "Nay, now, cousin Mortimer," said she, "I cannot let you go on. While you described your feelings upon our actual situation, I could not refuse to listen; but to glance at things which exist not even in thought, and probably never will exist."

"Never will exist!" interrupted De Vere, in his turn. "Ah! Lady Constance, do not do either the world or yourself such injustice. As to yourself, who that ever saw you—but no, I will not affront that modesty which, present or absent, it has always been my delight to think of, by telling you to your face how little you are to be withstood. Then, as to the world; superior as my cousin is let us not suppose that the sweetest lot of humanity, the exercise of mutual affection, designed by Providence for the lowest of its creatures, is to be granted to all, yet denied to her. The very thought is an impossibility."

He said this firmly, as if he gathered strength from the very act of explaining his principles. Nor did the blushes or emotion of Constance which, from whatever cause, had become very visible, prevent his finishing; for while she continued to listen with almost burning attention, he thus proceeded:

"All these things being clear, what, dear Constance, could I expect by becoming the *temporary* representative of your political power, but to be thought a depen-

dant *employé*, the mere holder of a vacancy for one more worthy and assuredly more happy, to fill. Forgive me, therefore, if I feel myself both too humble and too proud for what Lord Clanellan has had the kindness to advise; too humble, because I am far too much removed from you in situation to pretend to that equality, to dream of those rights which would render this office noble; too proud, because with all this distance, I am too near you in mind to submit to exercise a fleeting power, which might instantly be made by another to fade and vanish before his happier fortune."

The emotions of De Vere when he came to these allusions, were, with all his firmness, but ill concealed. His voice faltered, and his features underwent change; and not the less because, at the instant, something told him that he had weakly suffered himself to be surprised into confessions which it had always been his greatest anxiety to smother.

On her part, the interest which all this inspired in the heart of Constance, was intense. His suppositions called up notions which were not the less active and influential from being vague and indefinite. Like shadows of imagination, which sometimes cause even greater apprehensions, from being indistinctly seen, they filled her with an uneasiness as to the future, which was the more felt from the uncertainty that hung over it. At the same time, the emotion of Mortimer could not escape her. Her ear was fixed in the act of listening, her heart was affected with she knew not what tumultuousness: and she covered her face with her hands, from the fear that it might be disclosing indications of she knew not what feelings. A silence which ensued, was a relief, in some measure, to both.

Yet even this was distressing: for a theme had been started which neither could discuss, and yet neither of them leave without embarrassment. Of the two, however, De Vere was the least cast down; for he was supported by the excitement which a determination to do right at the expense of inclination, will always produce. While she, to whom all was new, all different, (ah, how different!) from what had been expected, was left to collect scattered ideas and shaken feelings, the very nature of which she did not well comprehend. All

that she was certain of was, that Mortimer seemed more than ever that superior and delicate minded, though perhaps, proud being, she had always thought him. As such, she looked at him with a meaning and a sincerity which a vainer man might have mistaken, but which, though it revited her charms more firmly than before, inspired him with no other feeling than a consciousness (very sweet to him,) that he had deserved her esteem.

Lord Clanellan's return put an end to the interview; but we may confess that from that time forth De Vere became more than ever the study and prevailing source of interest to his charming cousin.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN EVENT.

So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance
To mend it, or be rid on't. SHAKSPEARE.

WHILE this memorable discussion had been going forward at Castle Mowbray, much interest had been excited in town, as to the determination of Lady Constance in regard to the vacancy that had occurred in Parliament. Lord Oldcastle was surprised, and Lord Cleveland angry at the liberal proceeding of the marquess, a surprise and an anger with which the marquess himself was any thing but moved. Lord Oldcastle observed that the marquess knew not how to act with a party, which Lord Clanellan owned was true; and Lord Cleveland asserted that his support was not worth having. To both of which propositions the marquess himself assented, and to the latter in particular, because, as he said, his support was only given while deserved, and was, therefore, no favour.

The keen fears of Clayton, which had lately been sharpened by many untowardnesses, reported upon this as symptomatic. Lord Oldcastle disliked, Lord Cleveland defied it. But when the latter found that the Mowbray seat had been offered to De Vere, and by his advice had been actually conferred on one of Mr. Wentworth's determined friends, the secret anger which he

had cherished against Constance, and which his secret love had never been able to quell, determined him more than ever on revenge. His heart indeed, had long been the seat of tumult and vexation in regard to this lady, which had been any thing but assuaged by the asserted injustice of her father's will.

Lord Cleveland exhibited just now a picture of human nature which the moralist who judges the world, and the candidate who courts it, would do well to examine. With the ball apparently at his foot, perhaps there was not habitually a more unhappy man. Three great passions absorbed him, ambition, desire of wealth, and love. All had been defeated. Soured, disappointed, baffled, and mortified, his temper, (never the best,) was ruined; and, spite of the good breeding which he could sometimes assume, he showed that it was so. He envied every whistling cottager he passed on a ride, and began to hate the court, but hated Lord Clanellan more for appearing there and wanting nothing. There was an odious placidity, he said, about both him and his wife, which marked them for vulgar, common-place people.

There is no saying to what a pitch this would have extended, or with what event he would have closed his exhausted career, when a circumstance arose which excited him anew, and held out strong temptations to his strong passion of avarice, as well as to another, (not a weak one with him,) the desire of revenge.

His expectations of succeeding to the Cleveland part of the Mowbray fortune, was, as has been observed, no secret, any more than his resentment at having been disappointed in a more tender object. While in the very act of brooding over these matters, he was surprised by a note, intimating, that if he would meet the writer alone in Kensington Gardens, at a given hour, he should, *upon certain conditions*, be put in possession of information which might prove of immense consequence to his pretensions to the estates which had been withheld from him, and either pave the way to success with a lady he was known to admire, or gratify the revenge he was known to covet.

The pride of the noble lord was outraged to distrac-

tion by this note, which in the round set terms we have given, was anonymous. At first he suspected trick, and was galled at the presumption, which could dare to take such a liberty.

"Am I the sport of the world?" said he, in agitation, "and have I had so little command over myself?"

He read the note again, and perceiving it was in a sort of clerk's hand, too regular for the easy carelessness of an equal, became more and more exasperated at the impudent freedom of the address.

At length, however, he began to think that the lower the condition of the writer, the greater the semblance of some real communication, of consequence, as it was said, either to his interest or his revenge. This excited him, and as he was a stranger to fear, he resolved to keep the appointment. Putting, therefore, a pair of pistols into his pocket, he sallied forth at the hour indicated, and was soon at Kensington. He met various persons whom he examined, most of whom he rejected. Some were too careless; they ran up and down the mount; the world went light with them. Some were too absorbed with their own thoughts; they were not on the watch for others. Some were reading, and had happier interests.

At length he observed, in a retired part of the garden, a man in a rusty black coat, and still rustier wig, his beard unshaven, and linen marvellously foul, who looked earnestly at him as he passed. There was a scowl in his eye, mingled, however, with bold familiarity, amounting to audacity, which Cleveland did not like. The place was deserted, and the man looked cautiously round him, as if to ascertain that no one was near. The earl instinctively put his hand upon his pistols, which were not so small, but they showed plainly what they were. The man, wholly undaunted, gave a saucy smile, and fearlessly observed,

"You need not have taken this precaution, my lord, for in me you see only a friend."

"And pray," said the earl, with angry contempt, "who may *such* a friend be; and what his object in this note? for I suppose I see the writer of it."

"You do, my lord," returned the stranger, in the

same cool but impudent tone; "and my object, as you may suppose, is to serve myself, in serving you."

"Familiar enough," cried the earl, drawing back; for the man was advancing almost in contact with him.

"I mean not to be disrespectful," returned the stranger, "but frankness is the life and soul of business."

"Then frankly, but respectfully, if you please," replied Lord Cleveland, still holding back, "state what business it is which such a man as you can have to communicate, and what I am to pay for it, for pay I suppose I must."

"You guess but rightly," said the man.

"Know, however," continued Cleveland, "if you are one of those beings, which your appearance bespeaks, who are driven by their necessities to practise upon the credulity of others, not only will you find yourself mistaken, but I have at hand the means of punishing you."

The stranger looked as it were instinctively round; then, seeing no one near, gave a smile of contempt, which, from one of his squalid appearance, astonished Lord Cleveland, not less than what followed.

"Your threat, my lord," said he, "is useless, for I am one who care too little for life, or even liberty, which is so much better, to fear any thing. But make yourself easy as to my purpose. In a word, the communications I have to make, will give you a title to the Cleveland part of the Mowbray estates, and my price preliminary is fifty guineas."

"Preliminarily!"

"Yes! for without that, this important deed," taking a parchment from under his coat, "which, upon my honour, is authentic—"

"Honour!" cried Lord Cleveland, whose pride and disgust, heightened by the terms proposed, now got the better of him.

The man immediately put the deed in his pocket, and a scowl came over him which was quite terrific. At length, recovering his tone, he almost haughtily said,

"Your lordship is the best judge of your own affairs, as I am of mine."

"Your affairs!" murmured the earl, in a suppressed but indignant tone.

"Yes, my lord; I suppose I am a man as well as your lordship, and have affairs perhaps as pressing. In a word, I am able to assist your wishes, and I am able too to refuse that assistance, unless I am paid for it. If you did not suppose I had some such power, why did you meet me?"

The earl bit his lip. He felt that the man had, at least, some reason on his side; but, from his manners, and sordid figure, was angry that he should have exposed himself to a situation to be thus addressed. But he was also divided between his pride and his interest, and only hesitated from the doubts which so mean an appearance raised, as to the possibility of making good these assertions.

The stranger, perhaps, saw this, for, with cool effrontery, and after looking at his own dress, he observed,

"I see what is passing in your lordship's mind; but if I were, what perhaps you take me for, how much easier would another course have been! If I wanted merely the sum I have asked, we are here by ourselves, and you are so far right in the difference you put between us, that, I agree with you, it would be a most suspicious circumstance for the great Earl of Cleveland to be found alone in such a place, with such a wretch. What offers, therefore, against my honesty, might I not accuse you of?"

"Rascal!" cried Lord Cleveland, both exasperated and alarmed, "Move off: I have trusted myself too long with you."

So saying, he fairly pulled out one of his pistols and cocked it. The stranger, though still unmoved, and showing a coolness which the peer himself could not help admiring, took from his pocket a pistol on his part; but he also reproduced his parchment, and unfolding it, so as evidently to exhibit a legal instrument, observed, "You see I am armed as well as your lordship, should you proceed to violence. But this is the weapon I would rather oppose to yours. It is the actual deed of settlement made by your grand-uncle, John Cleveland, on his daughter, Lady Mowbray. To know its contents is surely worth what I ask, but to possess it, and if success attend it, (which I *professionally* predict it

will,) your lordship must come down more largely. As to the success, however, I am willing to argue on the principle of no cure, no pay."

Lord Cleveland having partly recovered from his anger, occasioned by the freedom and vulgarity of the man, began now to ponder upon the proposal. At length he accepted it, and instantly paid the money. The stranger, upon receiving it, said his name was Silverlock, an attorney, who, as he stated, had left off business, but, which business, as it rather seemed, had left off him. He had formerly been employed under the solicitors of Lord Mowbray, and evidently (though he refused all account of it) must have robbed them of this important deed, which had been searched for in vain for years, though the loss had been kept secret.

Lord Cleveland, more and more startled at the infamy of the man, conceived the design of arresting him on the spot, but postponed it for the purpose of extracting more information from him. Being asked, therefore, for what purpose he had secreted this document so long ago, Silverlock fairly avowed it was because he thought a time might come when he might turn it to account, should his necessities require it, "as," added he, "they certainly do now."

"It seems then, by your own account," said Lord Cleveland, "that you are a rogue?"

"No more," answered Silverlock, "than many who think themselves, and are believed to be my betters."

"It should seem, too, however," said the earl, surveying his figure again, "that you have not yet succeeded by your roguery."

"That is neither here nor there," replied Silverlock, with coolness. "I may have had passions to gratify as well as your lordship; though in prudence I own you you have the advantage of me."

The earl cursed him in his heart, for this insolent tone of equality, and then himself, for having given the sort of right he seemed to feel, to assume it. But he was fain to swallow his vexation, in his anxiety to pursue the inquiry.

Retiring, therefore, to one of the alcoves, he read and pondered the instrument which Silverlock had produced to him; on which, however, he observed that

the broken lawyer kept a ferocious eye, while he continued to clutch a corner of it with his hand, during the whole time Lord Cleveland was employed upon it.

But whatever his future purpose in regard to Silverlock, his lordship was far from comfortable with himself. For he had admitted a scoundrel, and that of the lowest kind, in some measure to his confidence; nor can we pity the indications of fear and shame which he exhibited, lest he should be discovered in the disgraceful *tête à tête*, to which he had condescended.

He hurried over the deed in tremulous anxiety, at intervals looking out to observe if any of his acquaintance might be approaching; so that he was by no means in a condition to make himself fully master of the document. Meanwhile, his companion, who seemed to be a compound of selfishness and misanthropy, enjoyed his embarrassment, and seeing how much the equality of manner he had assumed annoyed the earl, triumphed as it were, in making him feel it.

"Never fear, my lord," he cried; "you may spoil all by being ashamed of me. We are embarked, you see, in the same cause."

Lord Cleveland's eyes flashed anger, but Silverlock went on:

"You will not be able to comprehend what I have obliged you with, if you let this shame interfere with your powers of apprehension. You had better read the whole of the deed over again; and, as you seem not to relish it here, I would propose having the honour of waiting upon you at Cleveland House."

"Never!" cried the earl, absolutely shuddering with scorn, which called up almost as much scorn from Silverlock. At length, however, though irritated beyond all patience, and still determined to bring the villain to justice, yet, as far as concerned himself, unwilling to lose the benefit of his treachery, Cleveland observed—

"You say right. To be seen with so consummate a scoundrel, must preclude all power of deliberation. As I have purchased you, I must see you again, but not at Cleveland House. Meet me, therefore, to-morrow, and bring the deed with you to my solicitors."

"Stop, my lord," said the unabashed Silverlock; "whether I am a scoundrel for endeavouring to relieve

my own necessities by making use of your's, may or may not be true, but you have not yet purchased me. I sold you the *sight* of this deed, which you are at liberty again to peruse, here, but no where else. Or if nothing will satisfy you but possession, a shorter way by far presents itself on the spot, by which the deed may be instantly yours."

"Be brief, Sir," replied Cleveland, stifling a fit of passion; "and let me know the full price of your iniquity."

"I thank you, my lord," returned Silverlock, "and I think I am but moderate if I propose, for a check on your bankers for 500*l*., to deliver that to you, which may put you in possession of ten thousand a year."

Cleveland was startled; but as the other refused to relax an inch, or to attend him again, unless he complied, he found that his design of arresting him was probably suspected, and would be frustrated, unless he executed it himself. This he had resolution enough to have attempted, notwithstanding the desperation of the party; but he was embarrassed by fears for the deed, and the probable loss of all the advantages which had appeared, however obscurely, in view. As, therefore, there was no time for deliberation, he decided at all events upon getting possession of so important a document; encouraging himself on the instant, with the consolatory notion, that he might contrive other means for bringing the villain to justice. Silverlock knew quite enough of human nature to perceive that he had conquered; and Lord Cleveland murmuring something of wanting means to draw the check in that place, and the expediency therefore of their meeting in town; the difficulty was avoided, as if it had been foreseen, by the attorney's pulling out an inkhorn and paper, and presenting it to Lord Cleveland.

"One thing more, however," added he, "is wanting to this bargain. Your lordship must give me your honour, that you will not return to town, until I have had time to receive the check, and, moreover, that you will make no search for me afterwards. Without this, I am off the contract."

"Contract!" exclaimed the earl, with a mixed sensation of contempt for his companion, and dissatisfaction with his own conduct.

Silverlock was not wanting in a look of hatred on his part; but he waited with a curl of his lip, as if in subdued resentment, until the peer should decide.

"And how," said Lord Cleveland, after ruminating a few moments, "if your future services should be wanting in proving this deed, or towards any suit that I may bring upon it?"

"My lord," replied Silverlock, "I am ready to trust *you*, for your interest is concerned in it."

Lord Cleveland again felt uneasy, while Silverlock proceeded:

"I say I am ready to trust that *you*, my lord, will take no proceedings against me, at least until you have thoroughly ascertained the value of this document. But others may, whose interest lies the other way; and you will excuse me, therefore, for not revealing the place of my abode. But let your pride think what it please of me, I scorn to take your money, for an unavailing service. Should you, therefore, hereafter want explanations in regard to the deed you are about to purchase, I promise to be forthcoming (as far at least, as may be necessary to perfect my assistance,) on an application to this address."

So saying, he pulled out a dirty card, with a reference to some man in Lyon's-Inn; and perceiving the earl to be too much disgusted even to touch it, a storm of resentment in his turn gathered on his brow. For the peer, nothing was now left. He took down the address in his pocket-book, signed the check which put him in possession of the precious deed, and fled from Kensington as he would from the plague.

Let not the details of this scene be thought too minute. They afford a lesson to the proudest, on the power of a vicious appetency to break down the strongest bulwarks of pride. These often stand in the place of virtue, and it is grievous to see them fall, through self-interest, at the foot of vulgar insolence and sordid crime. It is not without its use, therefore, to show how bad passions may level all distinction, and how near, in consequence, the toe of the peasant may come to the heel of the courtier. In this instance, it must be confessed, the kibe of Lord Cleveland was cruelly galled.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CERTAINTIES OF LAW.

Between two girls, which hath the merriest eye,
I have perhaps some shallow spirit of judgment;
But in these nice sharp quillets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw.

SHAKSPEARE.

THOUGH restored to self-consequence, in the grandeur of his house, and the obsequiousness of his domestics, Lord Cleveland could not immediately recover his self-possession. His pride had been severely wounded by the intercourse which he had permitted himself to hold with not merely a villain, but one seemingly of the dregs of mankind; nor had the result of that intercourse been such as to satisfy his better feelings. On the contrary, locked in his closet, and any thing but easy in regard to the line of conduct he had pursued, he passed a self-examination by no means pleasant to his self-love.

It could not be wrong, indeed, to seek for the proof of rights, of which he might have unjustly been deprived; but it could not be right, he thought, to connive with a robber in order to obtain them.

He pursued this train till his thoughts became as unsatisfactory as they were tumultuous. A confused notion haunted him that he might himself be deemed a larcener, or at best a receiver of the fruits of larceny; nor was his shame lessened by the feeling that all this had been incurred with a view to attack the fortune of a kinswoman, and that kinswoman an orphan girl. Under these impressions, the insignia of a high order which belonged to him, and which lay on the table before him, caught his eye. He shuddered, and murmured something about a stain to knighthood.

Nor was Lord Cleveland insincere in this. We have

painted him alive to the theory of virtue, and though too frequently departing from it, never doing so without something like remorse, or at least self-blame. No man, besides, understood the value of reputation better, or indeed wished it more, for its own sake; and his mind was naturally so lofty, that the only wonder was that he ever could be mean.

In the present instance, all this was enhanced by the disgusts which he had undergone, from having forced himself to put up with the vulgar insolence of a low-bred villain. And it must be owned, if villainy always appeared in such a shape, few would be in love with it.

Altogether the Earl of Cleveland was any thing but happy at his morning's work; nor was he disposed to examine his dearly-bought instrument with that immediate devouring attention which might have been expected, considering its importance, and the means he had taken to acquire it. A happy thought at length came across him, in which, to do him justice, he was perfectly sincere. He resolved to restore the deed to the Mowbray family, as soon as he had availed himself of its contents; which, considering how interested he was, he conceived he had a perfect right to do.

His bell at length rang—Mr. Graves, his solicitor, was sent for to attend him instantly; and meantime he sat down to ponder the contents of his acquisition.

What immediately, and most struck him, was the inartificial manner, or rather the total want of technicality, in which the instrument was drawn. For, strange as it may appear, it was prepared by old Mr. Cleveland himself, assisted only by a very ignorant village attorney, who had engrossed it, and who was named as sole trustee to the uses of the settlement. To account for this, it ought to be explained that this Mr. Cleveland was a miser, a humourist, and a self-opinionated man, who had scarcely ever stirred from the remote district in Yorkshire from which he derived his name. He was skilled in mortgages; by which, added to dabbling in the South Sea, but chiefly an undeviating parsimony for full forty years, he had amassed immense wealth.

His vanity, as well as his avarice, had combined to satisfy him that the deed, which he and his country lawyer and friend had prepared, was sufficiently binding for all the purposes (important as they were) for which he had concocted it.

His only child, a daughter, was married to William Earl of Mowbray (father of the last,) with his entire approbation; the more particularly, because her husband had consented to take her without a fortune, on the solemn promise that she should be made heiress to all her father's real estates; which promise, however, had no legal binding, and was trusted entirely to the old man's family pride, of which he possessed a great share.

Nor was Lord Mowbray deceived in his expectations: for Mr. Cleveland amused himself during almost all the rest of his life, with drawing up various deeds of settlement, all ending in this last, which had so strangely got into Lord Cleveland's possession; and as it was universally known that Lord and Lady Mowbray were the promised and designed heirs, they quietly succeeded; while all the personal property to an immense amount, save ten thousand pounds to Lady Mowbray, was bequeathed by will to the then Earl of Cleveland, nephew of the testator, and father of the present Earl.

The following are the passages in the deed, which, however ambiguous the phraseology, were reasoned upon by Silverlock in an accompanying paper, as favourable to Lord Cleveland's pretensions.

"Whereas," says the deed, "the said John Cleveland has already, by his will, disposed of all his personal property to a large amount, (forty thousand pounds,) in favour of his nephew, Charles, Earl of Cleveland, meaning to settle his real estates upon the descendants of his only daughter, Maria, Countess of Mowbray, who, with her husband, Henry, Earl of Mowbray, are both now deceased, leaving, as their only heirs, William, present Earl of Mowbray, and the Lady Eleanor De Vere, wife of Colonel De Vere; but if they fail of having issue, it is his intention that the said estates shall return to the name of Cleveland, in the head of the family then alive; NOW THE SAID John Cleve-

land conveys all the said real estates to Philip Dowlas, gentleman, in trust for himself, John Cleveland, for life, and afterwards to the use of his said grandson, William, Earl of Mowbray, and his heirs *male*, failing which William and his *heirs*, to the heirs *male* of his said grand daughter, the Lady Eleanor De Vere. But if the title of Mowbray become extinct, then the said estates are to go to the then existing Earl of Cleveland, of the blood and family of the said John Cleveland who may be alive at the time when the title of Mowbray so fails, to be held by him in *tail male*, and failing the *heirs* of his said grandchild, William, Earl of Mowbray, if there should be female descendants of the said John Cleveland left, when the said estates pass to the heir male as aforesaid; then the said estates shall be charged with twenty thousand pounds, as a provision for such female descendants, share and share alike."

Such was the loose composition of this remarkable settlement, and considering its immense importance, in the disposition of the real property of the settler, it is extraordinary how little it had ever been known to the parties most affected by its provisions. As to the Lord Cleveland alive at the time of his uncle's decease, having been constituted legatee of the personal property, which as much surprised as it contented him, and having always understood that the real property was settled, as was natural, upon the grandchild or children of the deceased, the last Lord Mowbray was suffered to succeed without inquiry into any thing farther, the will commencing with a "Whereas, all my real estates are already settled on my grand-children, by my daughter, Maria." Then as to Colonel De Vere, being almost always abroad, he had as little opportunity as disposition to sift into remote contingencies, satisfied by Mr. Dowlas, the trustee (who had instantly become the managing lawyer of Lord Mowbray,) that his children were in the entail, after the *heirs* of that lord should fail. Under these circumstances of ignorance or indifference, the deed itself was stolen by the honest Mr. Silverlock, which precluded all further knowledge; and Lady Constance being left sole inheritrix, under the will of

her father, who had succeeded, as of course, by an understood deed of settlement, (though the understanding was merely general) there never had been a contemplation, either by the Clevelands or the De Veres, that her title could be contested.

But the deed being now forthcoming, its provisions admitted of a very different interpretation, according to the situation of the different parties. "It is clear," said the reasoning of Silverlock, "first, that Lady Constance, being a female, could not take what was to go to an heir male, whoever that might be; next, from the express mention that the Earl of Cleveland should succeed, in the event of the title of Mowbray becoming extinct, and the estates continuing in *tail male* when they come to him or his family, it is clear that the heir male meant, can only be the present earl."

And to this opinion *inclined* Mr. Graves, when he arrived, and had perused the deed. This was an extremely cautious gentleman, (if he might not be called timid) but who by the help of a sleek clean skin, plain dress, and supple manners, had acquired and preserved considerable business, with the reputation of never plunging his clients into danger. We say *inclined* to this opinion, because he had never been known to give a positive one in his life; and we would not wish to hurt his reputation in this instance, by asserting that he had departed from his usual practice. Lord Cleveland, it was said, employed him, because, while he always formed his own opinions, he was willing that their decision should be tempered by the other's caution. In the case before us, an instance of the propriety of this occurred; for no sooner was the history of the deed unfolded, than Mr. Graves blessed himself a thousand times, and besought his lordship to have nothing more to do with it. Lord Cleveland looking astonishment, the prudent Graves assured him that he was on the brink of a precipice, for that what he had done amounted to a compounding of felony, which was almost as great a crime in law, as a *præmunire* itself.

The earl, to his consternation, told Mr. Graves that he would run the risk; but added, that, as soon as he

had derived such benefit as he felt he had a right to reap from the deed, he meant to restore it to the Mowbrays. The prudent solicitor here turned his prudence to the other side, and besought his patron against this, in his most earnest manner, as such a proceeding, he said, might ruin the whole case. Upon the case itself, however, Mr. Graves could not be brought to any opinion which might be termed explicit, except his very full and free agreement with his noble client, that it was a question very well worth trying.

The opinion of a very eminent conveyancer was now taken, who said there was a sea of uncertainty hanging about the words "*heirs male,*" and "*heirs,*" or "*failing the heirs,*" which were contradictory; as "*heirs,*" and "failing the *heirs,*" might mean heirs general, which would certainly include Lady Constance. But there is also, added the opinion, a direct contradiction between the two positive enacting clauses, by which, on the extinction of the title of Mowbray, the estates shall go to Lord Cleveland; yet, on the failure of Lord Mowbray and his heirs, (in which the extinction of the title is included) they are to go to the heir male of Lady Eleanor. This is so irreconcilable that it will probably vitiate the whole deed, and then Lady Constance will take as heir-at-law.

This was too far from satisfactory for Lord Cleveland to be content with it: and, accordingly, another opinion, from another conveyancer, equally eminent, was taken, who said that though the words "*heirs*" and "*failing the heirs,*" if left unexplained, would certainly include Lady Constance, yet there were abundant explanatory passages to oust her, and particularly the clause by which, on the extinction of the title of Mowbray, the estates should pass to the Cleveland family, and, emphatically, the provision of money for female descendants.

So far so good; but the opinion went on to say that these last clauses were wholly contradicted by the preamble, which might possibly let in the descendants generally of Maria, Countess of Mowbray; and then the contest would lie between Lady Constance and Lady Eleanor, or Mr. De Vere.

The last opinion was wormwood to the feelings of Lord Cleveland, as, not only was it adverse to his own claim, but set up that of another family, whose success, of all persons in the world, he least thought of, and most deprecated.

A third opinion was therefore taken, which crowned all his wishes.

"For though," said the sage, "it were doubtful (which it is not,) whether Lord Cleveland or Lady Constance should take; if there is one thing more certain than another, it is that none of the other descendants of Maria, Countess of Mowbray, can take. For, however it may be in wills, nothing can be more clear than the rule of law as to deeds, that the most definite statement of the party's *intentions* in a *preamble* shall go for nothing, in opposition to a known technical form, (bearing one, and one only meaning) or a blain unambiguous provision, such as that upon the extinction of the title of Mowbray, the estates shall go to the existing Earl of Cleveland, in *tail male.*"

As for Lady Constance's claim, the oracle asserted that it was not worthy consideration, females being ousted in express terms; and Mr. De Vere's was equally defenceless, as, though heir male to Lady Eleanor, Lady Eleanor herself had no claim; and that whole branch, therefore, could only come in under the implication of the preamble, which, as has been stated, can never stand against a positive, known, and technical form of conveyance.

Fortified by such a preponderance of opinion against the rights of Lady Constance, and the De Vere claim being too shadowy to think of, Lord Cleveland was resolved to take the field. But first he wished to disburthen himself of what, to do him justice, weighed heavily, if not upon his virtue, at least upon his fears for his reputation, namely, the treaty with the villain Silverlock. For this purpose he wrote a letter to Lord Clanellan and in his quality of guardian, in which he fairly enough stated the transaction, which as he observed, had been thrust suddenly and unexpectedly upon him.

"Finding myself, however," said the letter, "as irrevocably as unaccountedly plunged in an interview

with a scoundrel, it was not easy for me to extricate myself, nor, for your sakes, any more than my own, to make an inactive retreat, and leave a document of such immense importance to one or other of us, in his possession. I trust your lordship will agree with me, that it was of far more consequence for the rightful owner to repossess himself of this deed, than by conniving at the crime by which it had come to his possession, to let one wretch more loose upon the world. My first impulse was, indeed, to arrest him; but not only from his desperation, this might have required more force than I was singly master of, but it might have endangered the entire and perfect possession of the writing. There was no time to plan, and I purchased a document to which I find I have no right, and which I am therefore ready to deliver to whomever your lordship will appoint, for the proper owner.

"But though I have no right to the parchment, the rights with which its contents invest me, are, I find, incalculable. The law people have given their opinions, some more, some less, favourable to me, but all unfavourable to the possession by Lady Constance of that part of her estates which her father derived from my family. Upon this it is most necessary that I consult your lordship; and as it involves a question of still greater and dearer consequence to me than the estates themselves, I request of your complaisance that you will give me a meeting upon it before you communicate the contents of this packet to any human being."

And what was it that was of greater and dearer consequence to Lord Cleveland than the estates themselves? Is it possible that this worn out son of the world could still continue to love a person who had so repeatedly, we will not say disdained, but declined his affection? Could the natural re-action of the heart be so different in him from all others, that he could still love, in spite of what he thought ill-usage, spite of anger, of thirst of revenge, and even of hopelessness itself?

It was even so; though were we to analyze this

wayward heart correctly, we might find nothing really unnatural in these feelings. That a man may be refused, be angry, and desire revenge, and yet feel his breast filled with the object who has occasioned all this, is of every day's occurrence. Whether what he may feel be true tenderness, or only an unneasiness under slight, which nothing can effectually cure but success in the end, may be made a question. Yet, while the uneasiness continue, it may pass for love, with the world, and even with the patient himself. But can he feel thus, and yet be really hopeless? We ask, on our parts, hopeless of what? If of inspiring real tenderness, which he perhaps cares not for, and possibly himself never felt, we say, yes! If of producing *some* change, of sacrificing to vanity, or of finally conquering whatever it was his object to conquer— we say no. When hopes, even such as these, are thoroughly abandoned, so is the pursuit.

Now, mark the application! Was Lord Cleveland capable of real love? that love which almost worships its object, and is the delight of a pure and delicate heart? In an earlier time we might be disposed to answer in the affirmative. The character and disposition of Constance had certainly moved him more than ever he had been moved before, and had he succeeded, his mind would have enjoyed the only chance it had of recovering its long-lost tone. But, as it was, that could not be. His desperation had banished those purer notions about her which had gleamed, though faintly, in his memorable conversation at Castle Mowbray with De Vere. They were now like images that move us in a light sleep, too indistinct to be embodied, too fleeting to be remembered. No; there was yet passion, but no purity in the love of Lord Cleveland. What, then, so excited, what so enchained him, as to give an air of constancy to his affection, which rather raised than hurt him in the world? Let him who knows that world, answer; Vanity! Pride! the pride of conquering difficulties; a natural ardour and haughtiness wounded to the quick. All these would find consolation

from success, in the end, quite sufficient to keep up the pursuit, though love had never been felt, or had changed (which it had not) into absolute disgust.

This, therefore, must explain, what we own requires explanation, the phenomenon, as it may be called, which closed the end of the letter to Lord Clanellan. For Lord Cleveland, from some or all of these causes, had never been able to banish Constance entirely from his mind; and he had conceived fresh hopes, from the important acquisition he had recently made.

He at least thought he had found an opportunity of appearing in a new character, for generosity and disinterestedness, by the use he intended to make of it; or, if that should fail, it still remained an engine of terror, and, at worst, of vengeance. How all this was developed, how conducted, the changes it produced, and how it ended, remains to be seen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MISTAKES OF PRIDE.

Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words
Can no way change you to a milder form,
I'll woo you like a soldier—at arm's end.
SHAKSPEARE.

Upon the receipt of Lord Cleveland's letter, Lord Clanellan, who had returned from Castle Mowbray, gave him the choice of the next six hours for the interview he had solicited. They met, and the first subject discussed, ended in all the satisfaction to the earl which he could have hoped: for as he had not felt obliged to state to the marquess the different hopes and wishes he had entertained in meeting Silverlock, or the exact views for himself which had afterwards prompted the purchase of the deed, Lord Clanellan, in the most un-

qualified manner, acquitted him of having tampered with a robber.

"Whether you were right," said he, "in meeting this villain without greater precaution, may be a question of prudence, but not of morality; and, having met him, I know not that you could have done otherwise. But your offer to restore the document to its true owner, stamps the whole transaction with honour."

Lord Cleveland bowed, and waited with some interest for the marquess to proceed.

"As to the consequences of this important *discovery*, as your lordship calls it; of a document which we must be permitted to assert no one ever attempted to conceal, there can be but one feeling," said Lord Clanellan, "on the part of Lady Constance—namely, that justice should be done, and the law take its course."

"Spoken like yourself," replied Lord Cleveland; "yet the stake is immense. Full ten thousand a year, and possibly the arrears!"

"Were it a hundred instead of ten," returned Lord Clanellan, "I should give the same answer."

"And would you do nothing, recommend nothing, catch at nothing," said Lord Cleveland, "for your ward to avoid so immense a loss?"

"To catch at any thing," returned the marquess, "implies something at least not becoming, and therefore, not worthy your admirable kinswoman. But I would do every thing, and recommend every thing, not dishonourable, to preserve her from misfortune."

Lord Cleveland's cheek experienced a slight tinge at these words. He felt rebuked, and rebuke was not agreeable to him.

"I should have hoped," said he, proudly, "that I had credit enough with Lord Clanellan, for these words to have been spared."

The marquess assured him he meant not the least allusion, except to his own feelings; and Lord Cleveland proceeded.

"May I hope, then, that any thing I may have to propose, to avoid so great a blow, to the interests of Lady Constance, as well as an *éclat* which I know must

be unpleasant to her delicate mind, may be viewed with good will, if not with favour?"

"As her guardian," replied the marquess, with politeness, "I am ready to listen as becomes me, to any proposal which Lord Cleveland may think it right to make."

"But you are cold, marquess," returned Lord Cleveland, "and my proposals are not to be thrown away upon an unwilling heart. They emanate from feelings which ought at least to be respected, and I go not a step until I am assured that I am willingly heard."

"If this mean," replied the marquess, "any thing in the shape of menace——"

"The farthest in the world from it," interrupted Cleveland, alarmed at his own haste, "and you must forgive any thing that may appear abrupt from one, whose feeling is at this moment too anxious to be conveyed in terms very measured."

The marquess looked surprised, and Cleveland went on.

"Know then that you see before you a man who, with all the efforts he has made to conquer himself, is still the lover of your admirable ward. She has resisted my advances more than once; and I know well what would be required of me by pride. But though I am not deficient in that respect," (and he forced a smile, which called up a real one in his hearer,) "I own that I can feel none towards so gentle a creature."

"Your lordship but properly appreciates her," said Lord Clanellan, somewhat softening towards him.

The earl then proceeded to explain all his wishes, which, never suppressed, had rekindled he said, upon the prospects which, what he still called his discovery, had opened.

"I felt," said the earl, "all the advantages it gave me, but——"

"You must give me leave to stop you," cried the marquess, interrupting him; "I know of no advantage you can have derived from your new situation, over the pure and disinterested being whom you seek, even

were all your supposed claims already confirmed. But I need not point out to you that we acknowledge no claims, nor even know of any that can affect our commonest interests, much less influence a heart, which you have yourself described as delicate."

"I confess myself wrong," said the earl, with a vexed air, "and acknowledge you have reason in what you say. I had better, therefore, come at once to the point, which is, that I had far rather owe what may devolve upon me, to Lady Constance's own bounty, by giving me her hand, than to any decision of the law, even supposing it were now ready to be pronounced."

"I am to understand then," said the marquess, "that you still love Lady Constance; and that, provided your hand is accepted, these supposed claims will be suppressed."

"Exactly so, and I desire your frank answer to my proposals."

"Frankly, then, as guardian, I shall think myself bound to lay them before Lady Constance."

"I conclude so. But is that all? Have you no opinion upon my offers? No advice?"

"None in the world."

"And why not?"

"Because not only is it an affair which concerns the lady alone, but I know not the person in the world who could form a better opinion of it than Lady Constance herself."

Lord Cleveland did not like this fencing on the part of Lord Clanellan, and, coming to close quarters, fairly asked his own sentiments upon his chance of success, "for sentiments I suppose you must have," said he.

"If I must give them," answered Lord Clanellan, "you will not be offended, I hope, if I say, I think you will not succeed. Excuse me if I compare your proceedings to the rough addresses of Henry VIII. when he sought Mary of Scotland for his son. He made war, 'and the Scots,' says the historian, 'resisted the more, because they did not like this *rough* way of *wooing*.'"

"Do you blame me, then, for expressing my opinion of my legal rights?"

"By no means: but I blame you for offering to compromise their suppression——"

Lord Cleveland absolutely started at this accusation; a tempest gathered on his brow, while the marquess, not noticing it, coolly went on.

"If I know any thing of Lady Constance, had she no preconceived opinions, nay, if they were in your favour——"

"Which it seems they are not," cried the earl, with petulance—"but go on;" and he folded his arms in a listening posture, but turned away to hide the impression which the marquess's implied supposition had made upon his spirit.

"My lord," answered Lord Clanellan, "let us not hurry one another. The situation you place me in is always a delicate, in this instance, a difficult one. It were easy for me to parry it, by merely saying that your lordship is of far too much consequence for me not to lay your proposals before my ward; and with this I might cease. But you have also pressed me for my own opinion, which, excuse me if I say, you ought not to demand."

Cleveland admired his placidity, yet wished himself under ground for having put his wishes in his power. But he was too far gone to recede, and summoned all his patience while Lord Clanellan resumed.

"I have observed to you, that even if Lady Constance had prejudices in your favour; (of which I know nothing) this novel, and again I will call it rough mode of wooing, would I think determine her against you. If her feelings are against you already——"

"Of which you know something," again interrupted the petulant earl.

"My Lord," said Lord Clanellan, "'tis fit we break off. You must excuse me if I content myself with saying that I shall certainly lay your proposals before Lady Constance, with all the offered advantages, and also the threats, with which they have been accompanied."

"I have used no threats," replied Lord Cleveland, with vehemence, "and I throw myself upon your consideration, not to let my eagerness to succeed prejudice me, as I perceive it will. I therefore intreat you to commend my suit, without the accompaniment of the threat which you think I have held out. Annihilating that word between us, conceive that I have merely *opened* to you what I have so lately learned of my claims in law, without the intimation that I mean to enforce them."

"You ask an impossibility," returned Lord Clanellan. "Were I only the friend of Lady Constance, to conceal her danger would be a false tenderness. As her guardian, it would be treason."

"Surely you are too honourable," said Lord Cleveland, "to take advantage of an imprudence which you must perceive has arisen from the anxiety of love alone?"

"I am distressed," answered Lord Clanellan, "but not embarrassed. It is wholly impossible for me, standing in the relation I do to Lady Constance, to keep from her the danger that hangs over her fortune; or, knowing the alternative your lordship holds out, not to acquaint her with the means of avoiding it. If your lordship, however, retract that alternative, and mean me to understand that you withdraw your claims *at all events*, then, and then only, can I think myself released from my duty in this respect. But neither do we expect you to do this, nor could you if you would, nor ought you if you could, consistently with your duty to yourself, or to those who may come after you."

"But I may gratuitously release my right," cried Lord Cleveland; "and I will do so to-morrow, if you will only tell me it will make a favourable impression on this heavenly girl. Say, I beseech you."

"Such generosity could not fail to impress any woman favourably," said the marquess, "and this I may willingly concede. Whether that favourable impression may rise to the height you evidently mean, is a point upon which I am equally bound, as a man of honour, not to hazard an opinion."

"My impatience has destroyed me," exclaimed Lord Cleveland, taking a quick turn in the room; then grasping the marquess's arm, "Lord Clanellen," said he, "though a man of all others perhaps the most practised in the world, you see before you, upon these points, an absolute child. Will you promise, at least, to give me time, and wait till to-morrow before you take any proceeding on this communication?"

Lord Clanellan, really almost pitying his condition, gave the promise required; but stated, that after what had passed, he could not longer keep his ward in ignorance of what so deeply concerned her; and with this the two noblemen parted.

On his way home, the spoiled child of the world gave a loose to his rage, which the cool firmness of Lord Clanellan had forced him to suppress. "I was a fool and a madman," exclaimed he, "to hope to make any impression upon a man who has no passions: an automaton, put into motion by rule and line. Alas! he never knew a sensation of love, any more than of ambition, or the value of money. Cunning, however, withal, for his ward; an excellent guardian; yes! yes! very excellent!" Then pulling out the deed, the moment he got home, he read it, with all the opinions taken upon it, for the tenth time that day; and feeling more than ever confident that the male heir mentioned could only describe himself, he started up with an exclamation, "Release my right! give up ten thousand a year, to be rejected perhaps after all! rejected, as I have been already! Ambition! interest! and revenge forbid!"

So saying, he ordered Clayton and Graves to be sent for; and breaking an engagement to dinner, he shut himself up with them during the rest of the day, torturing the whole English language from every thing that could be construed against his case, until no construction was left but what confirmed it. The result was, that he felt so confident of success in his cause, that he could not submit to withdraw his claim on the event of an uncertain suit; and he sent a letter in form to Lord Clanellan to that effect, only repeating, that he

would still rather derive these estates from Lady Constance herself, than from a decision of a court of law.

CHAPTER XIX.

PRINCIPLE.

I grant I am a woman, but withal
A woman well reputed.

SHAKSPEARE.

EVERY dinner table, and every drawing-room, the court, the city, all London, now rang with the subject of Lord Cleveland's claim on the inheritance of Lady Constance. Politicians forgot the colonies and the continent to discuss it; the shuffling at the whist table was prolonged, in order that the old might talk of it; and the young lost the figure in the dance, in expressing their wonder who would succeed, and in commenting upon the conduct of all the parties concerned. By this latter class, especially the females, Lord Cleveland was universally condemned, for seeking to ruin a young orphan, merely because she could not love him; while her rejection of him, under such perilous chances, was lauded to the skies. She was a true heroine, a model of delicacy, and greatness of soul. At any rate, she would have Castle Mowbray and the Staffordshire estates left; but then again, what would be her means to support such a place? and what were those means in comparison with former expectations?

Lord Clanellan had, like a correct guardian, laid all the great earl's pretensions before his ward. At the same time, his sense of propriety would not allow him to accompany this with one single moving word. The talk of the claim had already reached her; but wholly unused to business, and in fact almost embarrassed with the cares of her large inheritance, she received the account of the danger that threatened her, without alarm.

Had she been told, indeed, that half her fortune was to be actually taken from her, it would scarcely have moved, certainly not made her unhappy. But when Lord Clanellan came down post, to detail the overtures of the earl, no words can express her annoyance. Astonishment, disgust, and resentment, all got the better of her, and for a while she could make no reply. At last she was able to exclaim, "Is it possible I can be thought so vile? Am I to be bribed into the acceptance of a man whom I not only cannot love, but must ever consider as the destroyer of my father?"

A mingled sorrow and dignity accompanied this exclamation, which was deeply felt by her aunt and Lord Clanellan, who offered every consolation to a spirit evidently wounded. "Dear Constance," said the marquess, "I feared, nay, I knew how this would be, and I believe that duty alone, could impose this task upon me. The same duty, however, if I may not say justice itself, obliges me to add, that under whatever rough appearances, and however you may reject him, I am convinced that Lord Cleveland loves you."

A sort of displeasure, mixed with terror, came over the brow of Constance, at this intimation. It was evident that she disliked his attachment, more than she feared his vengeance. "Am I then," she asked, looking with surprise at Lord Clanellan, "to consider you as his advocate?"

"Never, dear Constance; never would I presume to be the advocate of any one with you; for never could I so much affront your own clear judgment and admirable heart. But there is a debt due to justice, to which the worst people have a right. This paid, I have not a word to say for Lord Cleveland; and if my advice be asked, I will give it freely."

"You are the same upright man and kind friend I have always found you," returned Constance, "and I will beg you to be the bearer of my answer."

"I am here for that purpose," observed the marquess, "but is it a thing to be decided in a moment? and may not your decision be the safer for proceeding on deliberation?"

"I want no deliberation," replied Constance, "to answer proposals which would be an affront to the meanest of my sex. For even if I could love this gentleman, such conduct as his would destroy all affection, in destroying esteem. But I do not, cannot love him. God knows, if it had been otherwise, I might not now have been the helpless orphan whom he imagines is so much in his power."

Here, the remembrance of her father coming over her, what the danger menaced to her fortune could not produce her filial tenderness effected in a moment. It was, however, rather a relief than otherwise to give vent to her feelings in tears.

"Tell him," at length, she said, on recovering, that he knows little of the person——but, no! degrade me not by explanations. Tell him, if you please, that what my poor father could not induce me to consent to, can never be wrung from me by self-interest or threats. Threats, indeed, I cannot consider them, since, as to these estates, if I have no right to them, he himself cannot be more anxious to recover, than I am willing to restore them."

"Noble girl!" cried Lady Eleanor, throwing herself into the arms of her niece. "My own, own Constance! who but must revere you?"

The marquess was also much moved; for Constance had been like a daughter to him, and he was overpowered to think, that the beautiful playful child, whom in her infancy he had been wont with the marchioness to fondle, had, in so few years, assumed such elevation of character, as, added to her sweetness, made her appear little less than angelic.

These admiring feelings of friends whom she so much loved, affected Constance still more, so that she could not conceal her emotions. Lord Clanellan, however, diverted her from them for the present, by the necessity he felt to explain what had begun to make him uneasy, lest the part he had taken might be misunderstood. Seating himself therefore by her, and taking one of her hands, "If I could tell you," said he, "how much I admire the answer you have dictated, you would per-

haps wonder that I should be the person to have borne such proposals. Be assured that in this I did not wrong the purest of all minds. In effect, the answer you have given is nearly the same as that which, without consulting you, I myself returned as probable."

Constance gave him a look of gratitude, and took his hand with an affection which delighted him. He proceeded :—

"But though I had the most entire persuasion that such would be your determination, it was not for me to make it in form to the person who had addressed you. However I might blame him, he had a right to receive it from no one but yourself, and that none but yourself should determine upon his proposals. As they might also affect your legal interests, it was still more imperative upon me to refer them to your own deliberate choice, and not usurp a judgment which none could exercise for you. On the other hand, I had another duty to perform to this unhappy person himself; for, under all his discouragements, I saw that he loved you; a circumstance which, could it influence your decision, I was bound, in the same plainness and sincerity, to lay before you."

Lady Constance glistened with pleasure, not at the marquess's history of Lord Cleveland, but at his own account of himself; and interrupting him (if one of the sweetest smiles in the world could be said to be an interruption,) she assured him that all explanations were unnecessary to vindicate a regard for her honour, "Which, I verily believe," said she, "no one else, save perhaps——;" but she here checked herself, and walked to a garden door, for air, and recollection, and that indulgence of thought which had lately often come over her, and was now one of the few pleasures of her heart.

In the end, it was settled that Lord Clanellan, after conveying her answer to Lord Cleveland, should immediately take order for the defence of her rights, should they be attacked. This being decided on, in a short time (so little worldly was her mind) she seemed to have entirely dismissed from it claims which, e'en

if successful, she felt would never affect, much less destroy her happiness.

Nor was this mere theory. The vindictive Cleveland, spurred equally by pride and the desire of wealth, neglected even politics (now assuming a most critical aspect) to pursue this new object. He was closeted often with Lord Oldcastle, but oftener still with his lawyers, and with Clayton—which latter person he seemed to have a peculiar pleasure in forcing upon a service, which both his sentiment and his fear of the world's censure, rendered unpalatable. He even ventured to beg off being actively employed against a family to which he said he owed so much. But the iron-hearted earl roundly told him he could admit of no neutrality, and that he must either obey him as a master, or lose him as a friend.

The sensibility of Clayton made him feel all the prostitution of the word friend, thus used; but in casting about to find a person, if he could, really entitled to that sacred name, on whom he might retire, and who might pour balm into a wounded conscience, he was forced to confess, that his search was vain. Allies he had enough, but they were only such as ambition binds together, in a chain, the links of which are of sand. They were confederated for mutual support, and the confederation lasted as long as the support could be mutually given. That gone, so was the intimacy. These then were not the *friends* to whom he could open a grief of sensibility; and others he had none. He therefore continued the slave he was, and added to the pains of his slavery, the pain of constant anxiety to conceal it.

Lord Cleveland saw this: and whether from detestation of his hypocrisy, or whether he was glad to make self-blame as noxious to another, as it was to himself; or because, as was the fact, he felt a growing misanthropy against all the world, from his disappointments; certain it is, that he seemed to have pleasure in the oppression of his confident, by putting him, as he said, upon the dirtiest work, in order to try how far his allegiance would go.

And sorely did Mr. Clayton feel it, when the charge of seeing Silverlock was committed exclusively to *him*. For an interview with that worthy person, relative to some farther proofs had become necessary ; and as the earl felt that he would be contaminated by the sight of him, the business (to the overthrow of all his fine feelings) devolved upon Mr. Clayton. That Silverlock was a scoundrel, was not that which so much affected him (though this, to do him justice, had a great share in it ;) but a vulgar and familiar scoundrel, was more than Mr. Clayton could bear. He could perhaps have talked to a rogue, but not to a blackguard.

And now, things being ripe, this momentous question, fortified by the best ability which the bar could command, was brought before the highest court in the kingdom, where, in order to give all countenance to his case, Lord Cleveland took his seat daily by the great magistrate who presided.

The world observed upon this. The judge was the political friend of the noble client, sat with him in council, ate with him at table, and was daily linked with him in public or private pursuits. This was boldly commented upon by the opposing counsel, who had here an opportunity of asserting that fearlessness of independence which elevates the British advocate above all others, and forms a pride of character as essential to the liberties of the people, as honourable to himself.

The great magistrate felt this, and gently hinted to the earl the propriety of discontinuing the practice commented upon. Lord Cleveland, who at first had been disposed to chastise, as he called it, the liberty taken with him by the counsel, had too much tact to oppose the judge. But such was his anxiety, that he took his seat at the bar below.

The hearing went on, and lasted the whole day, and the court took time to pronounce its judgment. But when the time came, what was the surprise of the world to find that, in the opinion of the court, all the parties were not before it: on the contrary, that a most essential one had not even been named, without whose appearance nothing could be done. In fact, the situa-

tion of the families of Mowbray and Cleveland, having been necessarily set forth, and it appearing that, though the title of Mowbray was extinct, not only Lady Eleanor was still in existence, but also a son, who, of course, was her male heir; and who might, therefore, under the deed, have claims as well founded as either of the immediate parties, the court held that they ought to be called upon to appear, before it would proceed with the cause, much less pronounce a decision. The whole, therefore, was ordered to stand over until notices of the suit, and citations to appear, were served upon Lady Eleanor and De Vere.

CHAPTER XX.

ZEAL.

Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father
In manners as in shape. Thy blood and virtue
Contend for empire in thee.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE effect of the interlocutory judgment of the court was very differently felt by the different parties concerned. Lord Cleveland was furious, and mortified at the same time: not merely that a doubt should be thrown upon his claim, notwithstanding the title of Mowbray was extinct; but that he had, even by possibility, opened a door to pretensions, the success of which would be the very last thing on earth to which he would have contributed.

Lady Constance, on the other hand, was so little disappointed, that she felt a secret and unaccountable joy, which she could not explain, nor even understand (but still a joy,) that there were the most distant chances, though the estates were taken from herself, that they might be decreed to a very different person from Lord Cleveland. Lord Clanellan, however, wrote her word

that it seemed the opinion of the counsel on both sides, that the judgment was more of form than any thing else, and would not affect the final decree. If only for decency's sake, they said, the court could not proceed to decide till all the parties who could by possibility be interested, had at least been summoned. Lady Constance, therefore, and Lady Eleanor too (who was with her when Lord Clanellan's letter arrived,) continued to think of the suit as usual, that is, as one solely agitated between Lord Cleveland and the heiress of Mowbray.

When the news of the judgment of the court found De Vere, he was at Talbois with Harclai, who waited for it in an agitation which was only increased when he heard its purport; and he trembled with excess of interest when he exclaimed to his friend, "You will, of course, obey the citation."

It was then that De Vere gave that memorable answer, which was at the time so much blamed by the old, and extolled by the young, "I will be torn to pieces first."

Nor was this a mere temporary ebulition. Whatever might be the construction of law, the intention of Mr. Cleveland, he said, in settling his estates, seemed, notwithstanding the slip, (for he held it no more) in regard to the extinction of the title of Mowbray, clearly in favour of all Lord Mowbray's children, whether male or female. He reasoned thus from the phrase used of "*Lord Mowbray and his heirs*," which so plainly indicated Lady Constance, that his detestation of Lord Cleveland, for what he thought his sordid attempt to pervert this intention, could not be concealed. This would have been his feeling, had the case concerned an indifferent party; but when to this he added, that the attempt was made upon an orphan, and that orphan Constance, his indignation knew no bounds. One, and one only case, he said, could arise, which would induce him to come forward, and that was the certainty if he did not, that, as against Lady Constance, Lord Cleveland would prevail. And when he was told (as he had been on the opinion of lawyers,) that this might not be unlikely, if the court held that Mr.

Cleveland meant that his estates should never by possibility go to a female, the heart of De Vere was filled with grief.

It was in vain that Harclai set before him the injustice he was doing himself, and even his mother, by not appearing to the citation of the court; in vain that he descanted on the loss of an opportunity, never to be recovered, for De Vere to obtain all he wanted to fill his proper sphere in the world. "If this can only be purchased," said De Vere, "by the robbery of my cousin, like my father, I will say, 'let us still live in the moated house.'"

Harclai, with some vehemence, and not, perhaps too much delicacy in his tone, showed there was no robbery in the case; and that if really Mr. Cleveland never intended to settle his landed property upon any but a male descendant, it was Lady Constance, who was robbing *him*, not *he* Lady Constance. But De Vere, shocked at the very notion, silenced him at once. Harclai now complained to Lady Eleanor; but though she saw not the thing exactly in the same light as her son, she absolutely refused to give him any assistance. "To interpose," said she, "even could I do so with success, would be an affront to the character of my son."

Harclai, who was not a man to be deterred either by difficulty or delicacy, from what he thought right, and who wished nothing so much as to see his friend at the head of a fortune, which he would so well know how to use, made a journey to London, on purpose to consult counsel on the case, and fortified with a favourable opinion, afterwards went to Oxford, to concert, if he could, with Herbert measures for driving this headstrong spirit, as he called it, out of a romantic generosity which was indefensible. For once, Herbert sided entirely with him, on the unreasonableness of De Vere's self-denial; but with his usual delicacy he protested against all interference with what might so affect the Mowbray part of the family, unless either Lady Constance herself, or her guardian, moved by their own

sense of justice, should themselves demand their assistance.

Harclai did not relish this nicety. "I love the girl," said he, "as if she were my own daughter; but she is at least but of a bad breed; and the marquess, though a quiet man, is a man of the world, and if we wait till they wish to part with ten thousand a year, we may wait long enough.

The President however was inexorable. He reasoned sensibly on the impropriety of what he called officious interference, and the bad taste, to say no more of it, of giving advice unasked. Harclai grew nettled; wished there was no such thing as good taste, if it was to keep so fine a fellow out of his own; and as to officious interference, "Were we not his guardians," said he "when he could not act in law? and in this point, if he still act like an infant, are we not authorized to manage for him, who shows he can so little manage for himself? Finally, perceiving Herbert fixed in his resolution, he accused him of change, and lukewarmness, because De Vere had refused his advice as to Parliament; an accusation which the President was nearly surprised into resenting, which only made Harclai sure that it was well founded. In the end, he left him in no good humour with the politeness as he called it, of men of the world; and conceiving a bold and decided plan, he drove to Lord Clanellan's, a hundred miles across the country and asking and obtaining an audience, without thought or preface, at once laid his business before him.

Lord Clanellan was not at that time in possession, in any minuteness, of the different features that had marked the hearing of the cause. He had simply been acquainted, by his solicitor, with the order of the court, and he was thereupon the more surprised at the abrupt proposal of Harclai. As, however, the character of the latter was perfectly well known, his proposal occasioned no very fearful astonishment, even though without the smallest management; but rushing in *medias res*, he opened all his own confident opinion on the case of De Vere,

and desired Lord Clanellan, as a debt of justice, that he would either advise Lady Constance to surrender the estates at once to her cousin, or, as he had positively refused to do it himself, to enter an appearance for him before the court.

Though the marquess was deeply struck with this generosity, or rather self-devotion, of De Vere, and, as has been observed, knew all his guest's eccentricity in his benevolence, his first feeling was that of amusement, if it may be so called, at the wildness of the proposal.

"And you think," said he, half smiling, "that as guardian to Lady Constance, and executor of her father's will, I should be justified in surrendering up ten thousand a year to a person who does not claim it himself?

"I do."

"Or if I do not this," continued the marquess, "that at least I ought to force him to be a claimant whether he will or no, by appearing for him, though he give me no authority for such an act?"

"If the man is *non compos*," said Harclai "I still say, I do."

"You have then endeavoured to persuade him yourself," said Lord Clanellan.

"I have, and he has quarrelled with me for it."

"He is *chevalier preux*," said the marquess.

"He is a fool," retorted Harclai; "nor do I fear being blamed by you, my lord marquess, for my proposal; for they say you are a just man. And as for the girl herself, she is of to high a spirit, and to little like her father, not to say I am right."

"That Lady Constance," observed the marquess, now assuming some reserve, "will ever act with uprightness, no one can question; and that you are but zealous and sincere in the cause you have undertaken, I cannot but feel assured. But that upon a summons like this, to a private, and perhaps not an unprejudiced opinion, I can yield up the inheritance of an orphan committed to my charge, or be guilty of a most solemn and dangerous imposture, by presuming to act for a

man in a court of justice, who gives me no authority to do so, does not precisely come up to my notions of propriety, and is not, I should think, exactly a thing of course. But if such an appearance for another, could be really entertained, excuse me, my good Mr. Harclai, if I ask, why you yourself do not make the experiment?"

Harclai, strange as it may appear, was not prepared for this very simple question; and indeed, under the blinding power of zeal, having persuaded himself that it was a debt of justice from one party to the other, he had really worked himself up to imagine that he was proposing no more than what was perfectly reasonable; and he stared to think there should be the least hesitation to comply with his views.

"One thing is clear," resumed the marquess; "that neither you nor I are the court; and another equally so, that though Lady Constance were to listen to your extraordinary proposal, I could not, as guardian, permit her to do so, but must throw myself upon the court, if only for my own justification."

"Would not your own heart's justification be enough?" asked Harclai, with vehemence.

"Not quite," returned the marquess again, smiling, yet rather admiring the impetuosity of his visiter, "though I will allow, could we only annihilate all law and government, and live like brothers, or rather like angels in this world, we should be very happy persons: and you, my dear Mr. Harclai, might think us very good sort of people, instead of being the thieves and cut-throats, which I fear you do."

"Not quite that," answered Harclai, "though none of us are better than we should be. At the same time, if I do think thus, there are exceptions; and I, at least, meant not, my lord marquess, to include *you*."

"Except as one of the set," returned Lord Clanellan, laughing. "However, to be as mild a rogue as I can, let me assure you, that no difficulty will be willingly opposed by Lady Constance to her cousin, should he appear: on the contrary, that the whole process shall be carried on as if it were an amicable suit."

"The devil of it is," replied Harclai, "that he will *not* appear; nor can any eloquence persuade him out of his obstinacy upon that point."

"It seems that yours at least, has been tried in vain," said the marquess.

"It has," replied Harclai, "for he swears he will be torn to pieces first."

"Spoken like the generous spirit he is known to be," returned Lord Clanellan.

"Rather like the blockhead he is known not to be," replied Harclai. "I am out of all patience with him, when I consider that the opinions of many lawyers are so much in his favour, and that even the court seems, as far as can be collected, to be inclined to him."

"That I did not know," said the marquess, with some anxiety.

"Not only this," pursued Harclai, "but by not appearing, though he may ruin himself, he will not save Lady Constance, but play directly into the hands of that manœuvring Lord Cleveland."

Lord Clanellan grew alarmed, and, quitting the cool, half rallying tone he had hitherto preserved, asked whether, and how he had ascertained the opinions he talked of, and in particular, the alternative he had just announced.

"I have been keen in my inquiries," replied Harclai, "and find that the court, on the argument, by no means assented to the position that the clause in the settlement that the estates should pass to the Clevelands as soon as the title of Mowbray became extinct, was conclusive against all other conflicting enactments. As little did they assent to the argument on the other side, that the general word "*heirs*," once used, could not be controlled by other words in the context to mean heirs male. This, therefore, had made the lawyers look more favourable towards De Vere. Then, as to the appearance, all agree that if no heir male of Lady Eleanor appear, after notice served, it will be deemed by the court the same thing as if there were none; and then you may be sure the devil will stand by his own, and Cleveland will succeed."

Lord Clanellan was struck with this account, which bore upon it an air of probability, and he became pensive and uneasy. He felt, however, to the bottom of his heart, the chivalrous generosity of De Vere, and could not help exclaiming, as if thinking aloud, "Such self devotion ought to be rewarded in the only way it can be."

What the marquess exactly meant might be questionable; but Harclai, still full of zeal, rejoiced to think he had produced a change, and replied, "It ought, indeed, my lord: and I am glad to see you come round to my opinion at last."

Lord Clanellan undeceived him as to this, and all that the man of impulses could obtain from him was, that he would immediately lay before Lady Constance and her counsel the resolve of her high-minded relation, together with all its probable consequences. The consultation with counsel was, however, prevented that very day; for before Harclai had quitted the house, a long and detailed opinion was transmitted by post from Lord Clanellan's lawyers, in which the views of De Vere's case, as taken by Harclai, were, to the great joy of that zealous friend, amply confirmed.

CHAPTER XXI.

ILL NEWS NOT ALWAYS ILL FORTUNE.

Mine ear is open, and my heart prepar'd
The worst is worldly loss, thou canst unfold.
Say, is my kingdom lost? Why, 'twas my care!
And what loss is it to be rid of care?

SHAKSPEARE.

THE marquess was soon at Castle Mowbray, where he found Lady Eleanor, who had become the *chaperon*, in the shape of a frequent visiter of her [illegible]; and who by her kind care, and the authority that seemed to be-

long to her in that place, furnished a refuge to Constance, of which she fully understood the value. Lady Eleanor, indeed, could not help observing, that much as she always had possessed it, she seemed to enjoy more than ever of Constance's affection, which was shown in a thousand engaging and delicate attentions.

As they were quite alone, no opportunity was wanting to their mutual and entire confidence, and many were the interesting subjects of the conversations they held together. Among these, two predominated, the probable event of the lawsuit, and the establishment of Constance in a marriage worthy of her.

Neither of these topics were favourites with the pensive heiress, though she was feelingly enough alive to her defenceless situation; and often, with her aunt, as she walked the terrace, or the straight lined cypress avenue leading to the castle garden, she would entreat Lady Eleanor to spare her a discussion which gave no cheering either to present thoughts, or prospects to come.

"As to Lord Cleveland's success," said she, "I am perfectly indifferent."

"Too indifferent, dear Constance," said Lady Eleanor. "For after all, we ought not to be insensible to the assertion of our rights, or the power of doing good on so extensive a scale as your present fortune affords. With such a mansion as this, and sprung from such noble blood as once presided here, the necessity of keeping up the dignity of both is surely not a matter of indifference, while the world is what it is. And hence, my dearest niece," continued Lady Eleanor, "the unspeakable interest I feel, not only that you should succeed against Lord Cleveland's scandalous attempt, but in the end find a protector worthy of you; in saying which, need I add that he ought, not less in all gifts of birth and fortune, than in all qualities of mind, to be selected from the noblest of the land."

"Dear aunt," replied Constance, "I know all your partiality would wish for me; nor am I insensible to the high duties cast upon me. But I entreat you, as I have entreated my other kind friends and guardians, to

leave this matter to Providence. At any rate, let us see the result of this unexpected suit, about which there are such different opinions, before we hazard any discussion upon another question, far less necessary, though, I acknowledge, far more perilous. Believe, that if the result of the suit is unfavourable, it will at least bring this consolation along with it, that it will shorten the difficulties of that other question in a great and pleasing degree."

"You mean," said Lady Eleanor, "that the diminution of your inheritance will diminish the chances that you are sought after for your fortune, not yourself."

"I do."

"Into this," replied Eleanor, "I can enter; and I think that, were you less endowed, there would be a surer hope of your being sought for yourself alone. Whoever is the aspirer, he must be capable of appreciating all the high qualities of my excellent Constance; and I own, when the other requisites of corresponding rank and wealth are almost equally necessary, the chances seem to me to be narrowed."

"And yet," returned Constance, hesitatingly, and pausing often between her words, "why must wealth be necessarily one of these requisites; wealth, of which there is already more than sufficient?"

"Because," replied Lady Eleanor, "were my niece a princess, she would only do honour to her rank; and a prince, or the noblest of the peers, might make his nobility still more noble, by allying himself with her.

"And yet, dear aunt, this was not your own choice, though born of the same stock, and holding the same rank with myself."

"If nobility is in the mind, returned Lady Eleanor, with an elevation which never abandoned her when she spoke of her husband, "I could not have chosen more nobly, more proudly than I did; but besides this, your uncle was of the best blood in the kingdom, and you forget I was not the heiress, though of the house of Mowbray."

"Nobility *is* in the mind," said Constance, and fell

into silent reflection for some minutes, only adding, "Yes! the De Veres, as you say, are of the best blood of the kingdom."

She would have gone on, but something, she could not tell what, stopped her, and the conversation languished for a few moments more; when in a more decided tone, she proceeded—

"As for this inheritance, what am I likely to reap from it but embarrassment, or perhaps danger? Is it not better, then, to leave it to Him who knows what is best for us, and to whom we even pray for deliverance, in all time of our wealth, as in all time of our tribulation, and in the hour of death itself?"

Lady Eleanor, much moved, embraced her niece, on whom this piety sat so gracefully, as well as so naturally, that it only made her more touching; while it accorded so entirely with Lady Eleanor's own long-nursed feelings, that she forgot for a while the whole scope of the lesson she had been endeavouring to inculcate.

"I am but a poor adviser after all," said Lady Eleanor, "yet this suit of Lord Cleveland's is as fearful as it certainly is dishonourable; and hence one cause of my anxiety, that my Constance should be settled in a manner not only worthy of her, but with a person capable, by his own wealth and power, of defending her rights."

"That will not soon be," said Constance, with gravity, for extraordinary as it may appear, she took no pleasure in these sentiments, and could not help observing in her secret heart, that her aunt seemed almost studiously to avoid the mention of a name, with which she had begun to be afraid to trust herself. At length, however, it appeared no more than natural to ask what was the opinion of her cousin Mortimer upon the issue of the suit?

"That Lord Cleveland is dishonouring himself," replied Lady Eleanor, "and that, whatever the construction of law, the plain intention of your ancestor was, that *all* your father's children, male or female, should succeed before any son of mine, or before the estates could return to the Cleveland family."

At that instant the iron gate at the end of the avenue grated on its hinges, and to their surprise, though also to their pleasure, Lord Clanellan advanced towards them. Constance ran up to him, and willingly received his salute, while Lady Eleanor, with somewhat more form, asked what had procured a visit, always agreeable, but on this occasion so sudden and unexpected?

"To tell you the truth," said he, "I came to seek refuge from that wild philosopher of yours, whom Herbert calls the man of the woods, and who seems to me to deserve his appellation."

"What has he been doing now?" asked Lady Eleanor.

"*En voie de fait*, nothing," said the marquess; "but in the way of advice a great deal."

"Advice! advice to you?"

"Yes, and to our dear Constance here."

"To me!" exclaimed Constance, "and to what purport?"

"Only, without farther inquiry or trouble, to cheat Lord Cleveland of his just rights, by surrendering all your great grandfather's estates, to your cousin Mortimer."

"Poor Constance turned scarlet at this sudden intimation, which fell in with she knew not what preconceived notions and feelings, but which she had never dared to analyze or examine within herself. Judge, then, her surprise, and almost consternation, at having this very notion roundly propounded to her, though evidently in a tone of the most absolute raillery. She, therefore, only felt relieved, for the time, by her aunt's taking up the subject in answer to Lord Clanellan.

"Harclai is sometimes so eccentrically enthusiastic for his friends," said Lady Eleanor, "that I can be surprised at nothing in their favour, however outrageous, which he may be pleased to entertain. But in this matter, marquess, your better knowledge of the world, and of this particular case, would, no doubt, have corrected him."

"He is above any correction of mine, I assure you,"

replied the marquess; "nay, as for that, I would believe he would be impenetrable to the Lord Chancellor himself. He, however, brought me news, by which I find your son is equally impenetrable on his side, though it is the other way."

He stopped, and looked at both Lady Eleanor and Constance, in order to ascertain how he might best proceed with the subject. Lady Eleanor seemed somewhat conscious, and only hazarded, in a lowered voice, "Depend upon it, De Vere will decide as becomes him." This produced another pause, when the marquess, saying the question was whether he should appear to the citation of the court, Constance in a downcast hesitating manner, ventured to ask, "And how has my cousin decided?"

"That he will be torn to pieces first," said Lord Clanellan, "which I own ——"

But the marquess could not go on; for on looking at the face of his ward, he saw there such contending emotions, that he was fain to obey a sign from Lady Eleanor to suspend what he had to say.

Constance had in truth been much shaken in nerves since the great change, and final demise of her father; and she had not recovered, when the fresh agitation occasioned by Lord Cleveland's conduct, and the suit he had instituted, shook her anew. And this, added to the secret uncertainties of her heart, (secret even to herself) made her particularly susceptible of either great, or soft impressions.

This announced conduct of Mortimer, excited both; and when we consider who he was, and that it was herself in whose favour he had made this emphatic declaration, with all our respect for the decision and firmness of this high, but soft-minded girl, we ask a few grains of allowance of the reader, if we cannot relate any thing very heroic in her demeanour, on the occasion.

To own the downright truth, she was completely surprised by it, and to her own subsequent dismay, suffered an exclamation to escape from her, in which,

though in a suppressed tone, the words, "too generous Mortimer," were easily to be distinguished; and spite indeed of the presence of her aunt, and what was more, of her guardian, her eyes filled with tears of gratitude at this account of De Vere's devotion to her cause.

Lady Eleanor soothed her with fondness, and her guardian, after supporting her to a bench, said he would fetch water from a fountain that played close by. But she instantly recovered herself, and with some dignity continued, "I am not ashamed of this emotion, though it shows how weak I am in nerves. But a stronger person might be overset by such generosity, which yet, however," added she, trying to smile, "must be punished by forcing him to appear. And you, my dear aunt, who must have been in the plot with this towering spirit, do you think that it can, that it ought to be suffered? or, setting all question concerning yourselves aside that I could ever consent to enjoy what might not be mine, from what would at best be mere connivance? Do, my dear Lord Clanellan, tell this high lady that there are other Mowbrays in the world besides herself, and that in all proper subjects of pride they are almost as proud."

Lord Clanellan heard and hung over her with delight, and was preparing to open what he had in fact made this little journey to propose, when Lady Eleanor, with some solemnity of manner, took up the subject.

"Do not let this matter be misunderstood," said she, "nor impute to De Vere or myself either more pride or more generosity than belongs to us. That under our confined fortune, or even were we rich, we should refuse what the law might *fairly* determine to be our own, even though it might trench upon the funds of one so properly dear to us, would be a generosity as unreasonable as I know it would be unavailing; for I do my niece but justice in feeling convinced that to such a proceeding she would never consent. Let her not think, therefore, that there has been either plot or intention to

connive at any thing for her advantage; and if Mortimer or myself enjoy credit with her for this, away with our false plumes!—strip us of our thin colouring, which cannot bear the light. To seek to reap the reward of merit for not appearing to a suit like this, would be a mockery of all real generosity, and unworthy, I trust, of the party to whom you attribute it. I know that Mortimer merely pursued his own firm conviction of what is the right, and the just, at the expense of what may or may not be the law; and trick would it be indeed if, from inadvertence alone, or defect in phraseology, he would suffer, by any conduct of his, an obvious intention to be defeated, and an orphan daughter to be deprived of her patrimony. In short, feeling that the law as well as the right, ought to be with you, and that we are summoned merely to fulfil a form, my son simply wishes to free the case from unnecessary difficulty, and leave your whole force at liberty to combat an antagonist of far different pretensions. This, and this only is the extent of what you are pleased to call generosity; and if for this we are proud, poor indeed is our pride."

Accustomed, as both Constance and Lord Clanellan were to the elevation of mind of Lady Eleanor, especially when speaking or thinking of her son, they were particularly struck with the manner in which, on this occasion, it was disclosed. But however light her aunt seemed to make of the determination, however she might herself be impressed with the truth of Mortimer's representation, Constance was feelingly alive to the warmth and zealousness of that same Mortimer in her favour; and the fervour of his attachment to her interest, and the burning words in which it had been displayed, sank into her heart. She was silent, but pressed her aunt's fingers within hers, and her countenance exhibited those emotions of good feeling which, when they appear in a young and lovely woman, always make her loveliness so much more attracting. 'Twas well for De Vere that he was not within their reach.

But if such were the impressions of Constance, with

such imperfect suspicions of the truth, what would have been her feeling had the real truth been known to her, as she now very soon learned it from Lord Clanellan. That upright person could no longer conceal the opinions at least that were entertained in London upon the probable, as well as possible success of the claim of De Vere, could he be prevailed upon to enter his appearance; and though he had been lost for a few minutes in admiration of the self-denying ordinance of Lady Eleanor in regard to their pretensions, the justice of his nature, as well as his very admiration, prompted him now to come to the point, and open the important object of his visit. It was obvious from the seriousness of his manner, that something sat heavy upon him; and Lady Eleanor, thinking that she might interfere between guardian and ward, would have retired, but the marquess requested her to stay.

"It is happiness," said he, "to think that though what I have to lay before you, may show an adverse interest between you in a worldly point of view, yet of such honourable materials are you both composed, that I would even seek out the one, to be the confident of the other."

Constance was all attention; and Lady Eleanor observed, "Marquess, you speak in mystery."

"After the colouring you have just now so generously given to your son's determination," returned the marquess, "you will probably think what I have to say, at least, surprising. But though I frankly avow my anxiety for my dear Constance's interest, it is merely right I should tell you, that the appearance of Mr. De Vere is not the indifferent thing you would represent it; and that there may be far more danger from him than from Lord Cleveland."

"Danger! from my son!" exclaimed Lady Eleanor.

"there can be no danger from my cousin," said Constance, with great sweetness, though the words half died upon her tongue as she attempted to speak them.

"I quite agree," returned Lord Clanellan, "that nothing that can be called danger by a just and honourable mind, can be apprehended from a just and honourable

man. But, pursuing the forms of worldly speech, we must call that danger which threatens our fair expectations, and our supposed right to the fortune we enjoy. I do not say that this danger is very imminent, or very certain; but from what I learn, I would not have Lady Constance think only of the claims of Lord Cleaveland."

"And is that all?" cried Constance, with an illumination of countenance which was perfectly charming, and only the more striking from its contrast to the seriousness which the exordium of the marquess had created. "And is that all?" said this exemplary girl; "that I, who may perhaps be adjudged an unlawful intruder upon the inheritance of another, may be forced to restore what does not belong to me, to its rightful owner. Oh! if this be the cause of your seriousness, how little occasion was there for it! how little do even *you* know me!"

"It will not be easy, I grant," said Lord Clanellan, "thoroughly to know the extent of my dear Constance's disinterestedness; but because she is disinterested, or that the contending party may be a person of so much merit as Mr. De Vere, we must not, on that account, slight the lessons of prudence, or neglect the proper steps for defending our right."

"Say, rather," interrupted Constance, with increasing cheerfulness, "to see the right properly determined, let it belong to whom it may."

"I feel this to be your principle so entirely," replied Lord Clanellan, "that although, if a blow be struck, *you* will be the sufferer, my *business* is rather with Lady Eleanor, than even with you. In a word, on every account, Mr. De Vere must be *forced* into this appearance. For even had he no pretensions himself, he may, by persisting, give Lord Cleveland an advantage frightful to think of."

"If the alternative," observed Lady Eleanor, after some thought, "is success either to De Vere or Lord Cleveland, there can be little hesitation, even though it may so cruelly press upon our poor Constance here."

"Oh! call me not poor," exclaimed Lady Constance,

"for if it enrich you, my dear aunt, and ——" she hesitated at the name she was about to add, but at length fairly introduced her cousin, though by the name of Mr. De Vere—"if it enrich you and Mr. De Vere, never will it make me think myself poorer. But besides, who could consent to be rich, if at the expense of the rights even of a stranger, much more of such near and dear connexions? Even Lord Cleveland's success would be preferable to this. But if my guardian *fears* my cousin's claims are founded, and he thinks that Mortimer will succeed against the earl's pretensions, though also at the expense of mine, he need not have brought so sad a countenance to tell the tale, for there could not be happier news."

The face of Lady Constance confirmed this sentiment, even better than her words. It was almost radiant with joy; and far from experiencing any difficulty in the course of action he meant to advise, Lord Clanellan found his ward ready in every thing to prevent him. She was full of alacrity, and urgent in joining her persuasions to his, to induce her aunt not only to obey the notice of the court herself, but to use all her influence with her son to join in that necessary act.

Lady Eleanor was embarrassed, and pensive upon what had been communicated. But the ardent Constance was alive for the rest of the day. Her spirits, which had for a long time drooped, seemed to revive, and she was all the evening peculiarly buoyant and engaging with Lord Clanellan, who never admired her more.

He observed a thousand traits of the new interest which had thus got possession of her, and was struck with the gaiety of tone, in which, looking at a great map of the Yorkshire estates which hung over the oak chimney in the guard-room, she laughingly exclaimed, "I always hated Yorkshire."

The night closed with a serious conference between the marquess and Lady Eleanor, in which the latter was made fully aware of the real points of her son's case, and sensible at last that her grandfather might really have intended that his estate should not descend

to a female. She therefore agreed to write a letter of expostulation to De Vere, in which the real party he was about to serve, and the reverse of assistance which he might be affording to Constance, were strongly set forth. This letter the active Lord Clanellan charged himself with, and the next day he set off for Talbois.

The change in the spirits of Constance seemed to improve in proportion as her confidence in her lawsuit diminished. There was an elasticity in her look and manner, to which she had long been a stranger. She was still often pensive, but it was not the pensiveness of gloom; she seemed pleased, she knew not why, and was evidently under an excitement of the most cheerful kind, only the more remarkable, because even to herself the cause of it was unknown.

CHAPTER XXII.

A QUARREL.

Oh, Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb,
That carries anger as the flint bears fire,
Which, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE marquess found a different scene at Talbois; for a contest, amounting even to serious altercation, if not to serious quarrel, had, for the first time in their lives, arisen between De Vere and Harclai. The latter, from the high soaring of his hopes, for the friend he loved best in the world, and in a cause which the chances of success had made more interesting than any other he had ever engaged in, had flown into downright rage at the still persisting obstinacy of De Vere.

"To think," said he, (caring little for the terms he used) "that a man of such mind should act as if he had

none ; that he should have the parts and knowledge of a man, yet want the sense of a child! Why, my very dog Triton, would know better!"

De Vere bore all this, and more, without feeling ruffled; such was his value for the old man, and so habituated was he to his ebullitions. But when, with the true verjuicy look, which Harclai's features always assumed when under the influence of real contempt, he reproached his former pupil with being a mere boy, who gave up the certainty of fame, wealth, and power, for an object *unworthy* such a sacrifice a mere *puling girl*, the indignation of De Vere was roused beyond bearing; and he became jealous, and even fierce in the repression of what he termed little short of blasphemy.

Harclai, in real anger, persisted in his tone of contempt; and in his fear and irritation at thinking such a chance for fortune should be so thrown away, lost all the little command of temper he had ever possessed. He even went so far as to accuse De Vere of being more under the influence of a school-boy passion, than a genuine sense of honour, and, in a taunting tone, added, that like the doating Antony, he had "kissed away kingdoms and provinces."

The feelings of De Vere were cut to the quick. At first, listening only to his wounded honour, he darted a look of fire against his accuser, but luckily found no immediate vent for the speech which he meditated in reply; and before he could summon his words, a sort of sorrowing came over him, to think that he could be exposed to such a reproach from one who had always so loved him, always been himself so beloved. He was, however, too much offended to pursue this softening train; and after checking some pent up words which struggled to escape, he limited himself to saying that Mr. Harclai's age gave him privileges which he was sorry to say he had presumed upon, and that he must doubt the reality of a friendship which seemed to be made a mere mask for insult.

"I never insulted you, boy," said Harclai.

"You have done worse," replied De Vere; "and

that so profanely, that it cannot be passed over. You have dared to disparage one, whom, I can only say, you have neither feelings nor faculties to appreciate; and the only excuse I can make for you is, that you cannot comprehend the purity of the sentiments for which you presume to reproach me."

So saying, he abruptly left the drawing-room where this conversation passed, and descending the stairs, with a hasty step, sallied forth to recover himself, as well as he could, from the bitter feelings of his wounded spirit, which this altercation had caused.

Harclai, on his side, was too much moved to prevent De Vere's departure, and his emotion partook still too much of anger to attempt it. His grief at being thwarted in what appeared so reasonable as well as so brilliant, had occasioned a paroxysm, which, in any great crisis, he was too little able to check. When, therefore, De Vere was gone, he contented himself with exclaiming, "*Quem deus vult perdere,*" and betook himself to walking the room in considerable agitation.

"Yes!" cried he, "the youth has gone away, stark staring mad, and this is what I get by my advice. However," continued he, (while his strides became longer and quicker) "he will soon come back again."

Then cautiously opening the door, he stretched his head into the passage, to observe, if he could, what had become of the fugitive.

"No!" said he, "he is gone, and perhaps will not return! that sharp temper of his has been much soured of late;" and he resumed the exercise of walking, only at a quicker rate still, adding to it a long solo of whistling, which seemed to assist in bringing the relief he sought to his feelings. Returning to the door, he then walked to the landing-place and went half-way down stairs, to discover if there were any signs of the motions of his friend—but in vain. He searched for him in the rooms below, became agitated, and almost, alarmed, and seizing his hat, broke out into the garden.

"Insulted him!" cried he, as he looked into the dif-

ferent walks. "I never insulted any man in my life. But he was always a touchy boy."

Then trying to recollect himself, "But what the devil," continued he, "had I to do with calling Lady Constance a *puling girl!* and how d—d unfortunate that confounded quotation about 'kissing away provinces,' should just then pop into my head!"

In this manner, and in an anxiety increasing at every failure in his search, did our man of impulses stride over the garden; till at last a fear came over him, which did not allay his uneasiness, that De Vere, offended *à l'outrance* had gone, not meaning to return, and would in the end break with him for ever. The notion melted the heart of the old man. He began to tax himself with the injustice, and at any rate the want of decorum, he had used in his reproaches; and the virtues and softness of Constance, whom he had always admired, but whom he had so disparingly mentioned, coming across him at the moment, he threw himself on a bench, wiped his forehead; and, completely subdued, some strange drops, like tears, actually rolled down his cheeks, as surprising to himself as they perhaps may be to some (but I trust not to all) of my readers.

This paroxysm over, he again set himself in motion, and proceeded to the stables, where it was observed he showed an unusual curiosity to know if De Vere's horses were all in their stalls. Satisfied on that point, he returned to the house, which he once more searched; but finding no one, he shouldered his cane like a sentinel, and in pensive mood resolved to walk up and down the broad walk before the door, wisely concluding that if De Vere had not abandoned his home he would return to it, and if so, by the usual entrance, when he would be certain of catching him.

Nor was he disappointed; for a very few minutes brought De Vere back to his mansion, but to Harclai's annoyance, brought the marquess also. In fact, having strolled, with little ease of mind, as far as the great forest gates that opened upon Needwood, and knowing lit-

tle whither to proceed, or how to act, he was surprised, and at any rate diverted from his moodiness by the sight of Lord Clanellan's post-chaise. The marquess, instantly stopping, took him in, and it was thus that both gentlemen surprised the penitent and no longer cynical Harclai on his post.

Lord Clanellan was, in truth, not sorry to find him there, and had begun to address him with a friendly salutation, when, to his utter astonishment, used as he was to his extravagancies, the man of the woods passed him by, neglecting his civilities, and seizing De Vere round the neck so as much to discompose his own wig, called him his dear boy, his good fellow, and said that he rejoiced to see him back again.

De Vere, though somewhat abashed at being made party to a *scene*, (which he always hated,) and that under the eyes of the marquess, was alive to the force of nature, as it worked in his eccentric old friend. He felt his own anger, seriously as it had been kindled, gone in a moment, and, without a single word of explanation, (which the presence of the marquess indeed forbade, but which, without it perhaps, would have been unnecessary) a mutual, though tacit forgiveness was interchanged, and peace was restored, where, indeed, the wonder was that it could ever have been broken.

The effect of this upon Harclai showed itself in a number of whimsical gestures, chiefly displayed in little attentions to De Vere. He offered to take his hat; reached him a chair, when they all entered the great dining-room; and perceiving that his coat had contracted some dirt from the wheels of the carriage, was in a hurry till he had got a brush to remove it. In short, he was like a nurse who had quarrelled with her favourite child, and thinking she had corrected him too much, was not easy till she had made it up with him.

To Lord Clanellan this was an absolute riddle; nor was De Vere at his ease under such peculiarity of behaviour. But the surprise of Lord Clanellan was of little consequence to the feelings of Harclai, who was

unrestrained by his presence, and would have been so by that of a king, in the enjoyment of the happiness to which he yielded himself—the purest, perhaps, which can belong to a good mind, and of which none but a good mind is keenly susceptible—the happiness of reconciliation.

The marquess saw that something had happened between the friends, but was too well bred to ask an explanation. He very considerately, therefore, allowed the ebullition of Harclai to subside before he opened the object of his visit, "which," said he, "the presence of Mr. Harclai is so far from embarrassing, that, knowing his attachment to you, and his cognizance of the very case that brings me here, it is perhaps an advantage to meet him just at this time, and on this very spot."

Harclai, however, felt a little return of agitation when he found what business the marquess was upon. He feared the renewal of a subject which had cost him more feeling than he had expended for many a year; and when he heard the proposal of Lord Clanellan, that, for reasons he was prepared to lay before him he hoped De Vere would appear to the notice of the court, the philosopher rose from his seat, and took to his usual diversion of walking up and down the room, exclaiming at intervals.

"I wash my hands of it—a burnt child dreads the fire—I only hope you will succeed, you will do more than I could."

"Were I to confide in my own efforts alone," said the marquess to De Vere, "where our good friend here has failed, I perhaps might not be very sanguine; but I bring with me in this letter from your mother, what will at least carry weight; and in the urgent wishes of Lady Constance herself, which I was requested by her to press upon you with all the power I was master of, I trust I shall at least find support."

De Vere changed colour when this message was delivered. He hastily opened and read his mother's letter; and the marquess, not to annoy him turned to the

window; but Harclai, too eager to consider the niceties of decorum, came close to him, and though he did not actually look over his letter, watched every turn of his countenance while he was reading it. The arguments of Lady Eleanor founded upon what she had heard, were soon passed over; but the letter closed with a few words from Constance herself, which seemed to rob the Hybla bees, and leave them honeyless. She told him sweetly how much she felt the generosity of his purpose in her favour; but, still more sweetly, hoped that he would be obliged to renounce it. "If really these estates are not mine, and must be adjudged to you, or Lord Cleveland, need I say," added the postscript, "who has my wishes?"

"My cousin acts like the disinterested angel she is," exclaimed De Vere, when he had finished reading the postscript, for the third time. "But that is the contrary of a reason why I should enlist myself against her."

"If ever there was an angelic mind," said Lord Clanellan, "it is hers. But give me leave to say, that this is no question of generosity, either on her part or yours. You have neither of you the right to be generous, till the law has determined who has the power of being so."

"Right!" observed Harclai, overjoyed at finding the marquess so entirely with him.

De Vere shook his head, still thinking of his postscript.

"You will, however, allow me to ask," continued the marquess, "of what materials you think Lady Constance composed, that, on the supposition that the estates are really and lawfully either yours or Lord Cleveland's, she can submit to receive them from either of you, as a gift? For such it would be, if they were only left with her by sufferance."

Harclai declared this was a staggerer, and there was no getting over it; "and I am glad," added he, "to find the girl is as proud as yourself."

De Vere gave him a look of reprehension at the free-

dom of the epithet he had used; which, under the ascendancy which De Vere had just acquired over him, told as he would have it, for it made him actually retreat. The marquess went on: "I could enlarge much upon this subject of pride between you, but the case really does not need it. I am sorry to be forced to think, from all the advice I have lately had, that my ward's title hangs by too slight a thread, to be even benefited by your chivalrous intentions in her favour."

"Attribute nothing to me that is not my due," replied De Vere. "Were the estates really mine in justice, I would not do my cousin that wrong, I would not dare to shock her nobleness, by presuming to offer her an elecmosynary present. Were I a sovereign, I might lay provinces at her feet; as a mere equal, or rather as the inferior being I am, presumption indeed would it be in me to pretend to be the benefactor of Lady Constance. But were the Lady Constance as inferior to me as I am to her, and I found that I had power to wrong her, through the mere ambiguity of the law, need I say, marquess, that I would not, could not profit by such ambiguity?"

"Nobly spoken," said the marquess, "and worthy of the high-minded man and woman who gave you birth. I indeed seem to hear my gallant and lamented friend the general, in these sentiments. But would you engross all generosity and justice, nor allow others to be either generous or just? In particular, would you prohibit one who is as near to you in character, as in blood, from partaking of these sentiments?"

"Heaven forbid!" cried Mortimer, "for with Lady Constance, I do not enter even into competition. What I mean is, that I would not profit by *chicanery*, to gain, not merely fortune, but——" he stopped.

"I would ask you to proceed," said the marquess, "but that really the word you have used is misplaced. Lady Constance's own counsel tells me, not only that he despairs of success, but that he ought not to succeed. For your ancestor's intentions are clear, and the *chicanery* would be on our side. May not therefore the up-

right Constance be equally shocked at the thought of profitting by such wrong? But when we add to this, that your refusal to appear, far from benefiting her, will probably throw this whole inheritance into the hands of another, (who certainly does not seem to stop at chicanery ;) when we are told that in the event that we have no title, and you do not come forward, the alternative is Lord Cleveland, I trust I have said enough to bend you from a purpose which I verily believe is only so obstinate, because it is so honourable."

De Vere felt himself moved; and Harclai, whose attention had been fixed by all this in a manner to make his solemn features whimsically cheerful, could not refrain from advancing towards Lord Clanellan, as if he meant to embrace him. He contented himself, however, with shaking his hand almost off, and exclaiming at every twist he gave, "Marquess, you have won my heart for ever."

De Vere, thoughtful, reflective, uneasy, and shaken, at length said he would so far yield himself to the reasoning of Lord Clanellan, that he would study the law opinions which had been given on the various claims. These he had scarcely yet allowed himself to peruse, satisfied that Lord Mowbray had been the uncontrolled owner of the estates, and that his cousin was not only his sole legatee, but his rightful heir at law. He was now, however, ready to give a more unprejudiced attention to these opinions, especially as he was alive to the deciding argument of the marquess, that, if he did not appear, his ward's case could not stand under the settlement, in comparison with Lord Cleveland's. Harclai, delighted, immediately pulled out of a large letter-case, two or three folio papers which the old gentleman had drawn up in concert with his lawyers in town, but which De Vere had utterly refused to inspect. To these, the marquess added the letters of Lady Constance's own counsel; and some hours were now dedicated, in the closet of De Vere, to the consideration of the most important question which had ever in his life demanded his decision.

The result was an immediate journey to London,

and many conferences with the counsel, whose opinion Harclai had taken, and who, being of the first eminence at the bar, succeeded at last in proving to De Vere, that, though he might sacrifice himself to Lord Cleveland, it would produce no benefit to the case of Lady Constance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONSCIOUSNESS.

I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face; a thousand innocent shames,
In angel whiteness, bear away those blushes.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE horn had sounded loud and shrill up the steep of Castle Mowbray, as the post advanced along the avenue that approached it at bottom. Constance and her aunt were at that moment upon the terrace, and each looked with anxiety for expected intelligence. "My cousin," said Constance, "will surely have decided by this time. Strange! that so clear an understanding should allow him to be so proud!"

"Do not let us blame him," said Lady Eleanor, "should he be in error, if he err on the right side."

"Surely it cannot be right," replied Constance, "to sacrifice himself to Lord Cleveland."

"You forget your own rights, dear Constance."

"No, indeed," answered Constance, "I only have done thinking of them, because every body says they are no rights at all."

"And are you so indifferent?"

"Alas! no! far from indifferent, for I wish this hill were not so steep, that you might have the letter which that unconscious little wretch is bringing you so slowly."

Now, the unconscious little wretch whom Constance thus abused, was forcing his poor jade to strain her veins to get up the hill the quicker, from seeing he was waited for by the ladies of the castle, and a minute or two placed the expected packet in Lady Eleanor's hands.

"It is astonishing," said her son, "what a sensation these concerns of ours have occasioned in both the law and other circles here. It is only to be equalled by the extraordinary ignorance which prevails on many of the facts. By many, I am represented (that ever such horror should be promulgated!) as seeking to enrich myself through the ambiguities of law, at the expense of one, in defence of whose rights you know I would expend my own last shilling.

"What a world is this, when truth can be so violated, and honour so sported with! Much as Lord Clanellan's account of the law opinions is confirmed against the interests of that dear one, whom it cuts me to pieces to seem to oppose, sooner would I suffer such destruction than submit to such degradation in the public mind. There are moments when I would hide myself in Siberia, rather than, by obeying the citation, encourage such a notion. But the alternative is too revolting. While Lady Constance's counsel exhibit any thing but confidence, the opinion of all the others is, that if *we* recede, *Cleveland* must prevail—Cleveland, who has succeeded in persuading the world, that a mere well-born beggar is seeking to better his fortunes at the expense of his family.

"I grieve to tell you, mother, how all this affects me. You may judge of it by your own feeling, and your remembrance of that clear spirit from which you are separated. But the argument of Lord Clanellan (to say nothing of Harclai, who is here) is unanswerable. However jealous you may be of your own honour, say they, however anxious for another's rights, if the first can be cleared by the mere truth, and the last must be sacrificed to an unprincipled invader, unless you appear, are you to quit the field when flight would only prove the more certain destruction of the

cause you most wish to maintain? This perhaps would not shake me; for, if a mere ambiguity, or, as I should call it, chicanery, is to despoil a noble orphan of her fortune, it will not relieve me that that spoiler should be myself. But when I am told the clear intention of our ancestor was, that no female should succeed to these estates, and that the real question lies between Lord Cleveland and me, I feel that, if this can be proved, I ought even from duty to stand in the breach. Something also whispers me that by doing so, I may repair the injustice of fortune, and at the same time take a noble revenge on the world?"

"And what is that revenge?" asked Constance, in agitation, on her aunt's finishing this letter.

Lady Eleanor turned to her niece, and beheld, in her eloquent eyes, and speaking manner, all that these passages had inspired. But she was scarcely less agitated herself. "Poor Mortimer," exclaimed she, "with a soul so clear, to be exposed to calumny!"

"He is too high for it to reach him," said Constance.

"Yet it reached him before," observed Lady Eleanor.

"So it did Mr. Wentworth," returned Constance, "and how has it been put down? Depend upon it," continued she, proudly, and yet somewhat joyously, "my cousin will assert himself, and I rejoice at his decision: but these passages about revenge I do not understand."

"My noble girl!" cried Lady Eleanor, "but I trust not the less true to yourself, than noble to others."

"Dear aunt," cried Constance, "what mean these mysterious words?"

"I scarcely know," said Lady Eleanor, and she pondered once more, the concluding passages of her son's letter.

"Depend upon it," at length she exclaimed, "he will ever be true to you, Constance."

"True to me!" cried Constance.

Strange that such a little sentence should have the effect of exciting all that beautiful colour we once de-

scribed as belonged to Constance. It mantled on her cheek, deepened the rose of her lip, and gave an additional sweetness to her eyes, which, however, became instantly downcast, as if shunning inquiry, the moment she felt herself observed by her aunt. Oh! lovely, rich, delicious confusion, of a pure and sensible heart, that fears its own secret! What pencil can paint, what pen describe thee? Alas! not mine, though imagination has not yet abandoned me, and my dreams of Constance are not yet over. No!

> " Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
> " Nor age so eat up my invention,"

but that Constance, whose friendship exceeded in delight the rapture of many a transitory passion, still dwells in my memory; and when I think of that friendship,

> " The loveliest visions still can shed
> " Unfading pleasures round my head;
> " Nor would I change, or happier be,
> " For all love's fleeting ecstacy."

The reader, if he is young, will excuse this little rhapsody; if old, I refer him to the days of his youth. I trust, at any rate, that he has feelings still left, not so deadened by the strifes of the world, as to be insensible to the power of goodness and beauty conjoined, as they appeared in the abashed, yet all-awakened Constance. Such she was, when she found her aunt scrutinizing her, after the little exclamation which she had suffered to escape from her, of " true to me!"

We will not say that with all her singleness of heart, and inexperience of the passing world, the notions which now came into Lady Eleanor's mind, entered there for the first time. From a period very soon after Lord Mowbray's death, and pointedly from the time of the memorable discussion between the cousins, in regard to the seat, the manner and language of Constance respecting De Vere, had been gradually changing. There were evidently more restraint, more caution, more fear: but also more interest, more surprises,

more confusion; and as Mortimer's own secret was now fully known to his mother, what wonder if even a less guileless person than Lady Eleanor, should have watched all this vigilant scrutiny? But since the prospects consequent to the law-suit had so expanded, an anxiety, from we know not what hopes, or opinions, or curiosity, had taken possession of her heart, in regard to the real feelings of her niece towards Mortimer. A more adroit mother would have perpetually endeavoured to fathom this, till she had succeeded in the investigation. But in the uncertainty respecting her son's future fortune, Lady Eleanor did not herself know what to wish, and did not therefore dare (or was not mistress of the art, had she dared) to gain any thing from her niece, which her niece did not choose to tell her.

Still, from the interest displayed by Constance for Mortimer's decision, and then for his success, and not a little perhaps from the contentedness, and sometimes more than contentedness, with which she contemplated her own probable failure, Lady Eleanor could not help drawing conclusions, which she knew not yet whether to hail with joy, or deplore with sorrow. If her son proved to be Mr. Cleveland's heir, and could therefore pretend to such a jewel as the affection of Constance; in what crown, or by what monarch, was ever jewel worn with such pride as this would be by Mortimer? Should he fail, and continue to languish in his present inferiority, she knew his heart too well not to feel convinced that it would break before he would permit it to encourage pretensions, though he might not be able to prevent it from fostering love. And then that dearest point of his ambition, the favour of his cousin (that ambition which made him laugh at all for which the Oldcastles and Clevelands were struggling,) would only be misery to her without being felicitous to him.

Such were the contending feelings of this virtuous woman, whenever she thought of what might be passing in the heart of her niece; feelings for which the world would laugh at her, but for which I and others gave her all our reverence, and still give it, now that she has long been where she may be smiling at that

same world, and all its anxieties, its grandeur, and its littleness.

But, return we to our story, and the beautiful confusion of Constance, which told so much. The scrutiny of her aunt lasted not half a minute, yet it produced a silence of some time before her consciousness appeared to diminish. It was rather a relief to her, therefore, than otherwise, to be interrupted by her groom of the chambers advancing along the terrace to announce the visit of no less a personage than Sir Bertie Brewster.

He approached them with rather a jaunty air, his hat off several paces before he came up; when he intimated that he was just from town, in his way to his seat higher in the country, and could not help going out of his road a few miles to condole with them on the loss they and the country had sustained in his excellent old friend Lord ——, but he stopped, for he saw Lady Constance shrinking, and even shivering with the repugnance which the latter part of this speech had excited. A peasant's honest clumsiness would not have so shocked her. Unconscious of his bad taste, Sir Bertie asked if she was ill.

"Not ill," said Lady Eleanor, "but you see Lady Constance is overcome by unexpected visiters."

Far from taking his leave, Sir Bertie offered his arm, which was declined; when, unabashed, he proceeded, "Well, now, this is very extraordinary, considering how many months have passed—"

"Sir Bertie," interrupted Lady Eleanor, "we are obliged to you for your good intentions, but you see Lady Constance is not well."

Then fearing a continuance of the ill-judged topic, she hastily added, "Perhaps you bring us news from town?"

"There is nothing," returned Sir Bertie; "that is, nothing at court, but this sad history of Lord Cleveland's claims against your ladyships. I do hope and trust he will not succeed."

"And is that all?" said Lady Eleanor; "there must indeed be a dearth of news, if such things can interest."

"I am glad to find your ladyship so much at your ease," replied the knight; "for I was shocked to hear that it was very likely Cleveland would succeed, especially after that extraordinary discovery, which he made in so extraordinary a way, and which all the world say does such credit to his resolution and generosity; though I, for my part, think it may be attributed to very different motives."

Lady Eleanor expressing her ignorance of his allusion, the pleased Sir Bertie said he should be happy to acquaint her with the story, only he quite wondered she had not heard it before. He then informed them, that Lord Cleveland had one day received an anonymous letter telling him that one Silvertop, or Silversides, (he could not tell which) who was a gambler and highwayman by profession, had stolen a deed, on which the whole title of Lady Constance to the Yorkshire estates depended; that his lordship had in consequence proceeded alone to the cellar of some inn in the Strand, where the letter said the robber lived concealed, and drawing his sword before the wretch could get at his pistols, which he attempted to do, forced him to surrender the deed, which he most generously restored to the Mowbray family.

Spite of their late seriousness, neither of the ladies could help being almost amused with this perversion of the truth, and the credulity of the world in allowing currency to such a report. Lady Constance, however, wished not the conversation to proceed, and contented herself with saying it was an extraordinary world; but Lady Eleanor could not help asking Sir Bertie how the same persons who believed in the generosity he had talked of, reconciled it with the suit which Lord Cleveland had instituted?

"That to be sure is a little difficult," replied the knight, turning to Constance; "but the report is, that Lord Cleveland's lawyer, who was entrusted to restore the deed, naturally read it first, and then discovering that the late Lord Mowbray had no right to bequeath these estates to your ladyship, you had yourself forced Lord Cleveland to commence these proceedings in the

nature of an amicable suit, in which we are all so sorry (particularly I assure you, her Majesty herself) to hear he is likely to succeed."

And with these words, and fifty bows, the happy knight, (happy in having been admitted to this visit) took his leave.

"And is it thus," said Lady Eleanor, as soon as he was gone, "that the world can palter with facts? and are these the certainties by which men's actions are judged? If this story be admitted as not false, what history can be true?"

"This, and my cousin's letter," observed Constance, "are enough to render one afraid of the world. What I saw of it before, did not make me in love with it; what I hear of it now, makes me dread to return to it. Yet with such persons as Lord and Lady Clanellan, and you, dearest aunt, and Mr. Wentworth, and a few more, human nature cannot be so bad as Mr. Harclai sometimes says it is. At the same time I am still puzzled with what my cousin Mortimer means by taking his revenge of it."

Lady Eleanor said she was puzzled too, in which she perhaps spoke more from a wish to quiet the agitation of her niece, than from ignorance of the meaning of her son. The walk, however here ended, and the morning passed in that sort of serious abstraction, amounting not quite to sadness, but far distant from that happy calm which is always so incompatible with a state of suspense.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COURT.

You are well encountered here, my cousin Mowbray."
SHAKSPEARE.

Is that the law?
SHAKSPEARE.

WILLINGLY would we return to the public interests of this interesting time, from which many readers may think we have been too long absent. For the star of Mr. Wentworth had begun to prevail over that of his rival; and from the advance towards an improved state of being, of every kind, throughout the nation, which we formerly touched upon, the influential ranks in the state looked for a spirit more decidedly patriotic than they found in the trimming politics of the minister. In fact, not to repeat former topics, Lord Oldcastle's government was so little cemented by any known great principle, that, upon the smallest concussion, it was ready to fall to pieces over his head. But to this we cannot yet return; for we own ourselves so absorbed in the private fate of De Vere, and of her whose interests seemed to govern him more than his own, that perhaps we may be forgiven if we pursue that part of his story to its end, although it may carry us, in point of time, a little beyond some other incidents, which are yet of no small consequence to our general design.

The arrival of De Vere and Harclai in town made a considerable change in the face of things; and Herbert, who was on the spot, did not now refuse his counsel. The rectitude of the President, upon being informed of the probable reality of things, could not withhold his opinion, when asked by De Vere; but before he took any active part, he requested, and obtained leave to

consult Lord Clanellan, as the guardian of Constance. "I so entirely," said he, "love and admire that exemplary creature, that even my love for, and desire to benefit you, would not permit me to stir hand or foot to do her harm." De Vere forgave him from the bottom of his heart.

The good President, however, felt relieved when he found from Lord Clanellan, that in the opinion of all that part of the family, the real question was between De Vere and Lord Cleveland; and he willingly therefore brought to De Vere's little council the aid of all that ability and shrewdness, tact and knowledge, for which he was so remarkable.

It was presently known, that, as between De Vere and his cousin, the suit had become purely amicable. By degrees, too, the truth respecting Lord Cleveland slipped out. The scene with Silverlock in Kensington gardens, was accurately stated; and the consequence was, that no private cause, save perhaps that of Douglas or Annesley, ever excited the public interest more. The effect upon Lord Cleveland may be conceived. He was lowered in that predominance which in every thing he affected; he was accused as a grasping man, who would, if he could, take advantage of a legal flaw, to deprive a family of their undoubted rights. His unhappiness of mind only increased; and though while under the actual excitement of the process, his feelings perhaps were smothered, yet in the solitude of his closet, or his chamber, he was a remarkable instance that, in point of real prosperity, he with whom the world seems to go best, may sometimes envy those whom it appears to favour least.

As the final hearing approached, Lord Cleveland's anxiety became almost unbearable. It was not that he now hoped success for the sake of the wealth it would bring to himself; but for the sake of that which it would keep from another. It is certain that with external coolness, and even carelessness of manner, he execrated himself a thousand times a day, for the chances of fortune which he had thus forced upon De Vere. Sad ex-

ample of that want of regulation, and that habitual worldly indulgence, which were the original causes of his mental ruin.

Upon the hearing, the court was crowded. Peers and ministers were upon the bench, where also appeared Mr. Wentworth, who seemed, from first to last, to be as interested as any of the parties. Lord Clanellan mixed with his friends, and talked undisturbedly of the cause. Lord Cleveland did so, too, and talked of Newmarket. De Vere would have been absent, but for the absolute requisition of his counsel, who said that there were points upon which he must not refuse to put himself under their guidance. Not so, Harclai, whom the requisition of the same counsel could not keep away, and whose saturnine countenance, as arguments pressed for or against, showed itself in a manner sometimes even to interrupt the peaceableness of the proceedings.

The counsel for Lord Cleveland began. He took high ground, and reasoned strenuously and cogently upon the positive enactment of the deed, in favour of his client, and the total want of it on the part of Lady Constance. He marked the pointed difference in the rules of law, as applicable to deeds, or wills; that the one was technical, the other general; the will open to explanation by common phrases; the deed always strict, and construed to the letter. Hence the preamble to the will was always something, to a deed generally nothing. But under either, he said, Lady Constance must fail; as, from the whole tenor of the settlement, whether in the preamble or the body of it, nothing could be clearer than that an heir male, and not a female, should succeed. Who that heir male was to be, was the question; and he contended that it could only be Lord Cleveland. "For although," continued he, "the descendants of Maria, Countess of Mowbray, are pointed at in the *preamble*, and that might avail to show intention, if it were a *will*; yet it cannot stand in competition with a positive; unambiguous, known form of conveyance, such as that, upon the extinction of the title of Mowbray, the estates shall go to the Earl of

Cleveland, in *tail male*." He admitted that there was the faint expression of 'failing Lord Mowbray and his *heirs*,' without saying *heirs male*; but this, he contended, was merely incidental, and could not stand against the clear, definite proposition in the deed above-mentioned. But if farther proof could be wanting, it was put expressly out of doubt by the provision made for female descendants, by a fixed sum of money to be charged upon the estate. Then, as to the claim of Mr. De Vere, the same reasoning, with the exception that he was not provided for at all, applied against *him*, for that his claim was chiefly founded on the preamble, which in the mere general language of common parlance, states it to be the intention of the settler, that the estates shall go to the *descendants* of Maria, Countess of Mowbray. But could this even pass for any thing of itself, it was positively contradicted by the express proposition in the body of the deed, in regard to the succession of the Earl of Cleveland, upon the extinction of the title of Mowbray. Upon this the advocate took his stand, and pressed the judgment of the court.

The audience, for the most part, were impressed by this argument, to which the court listened with patient attention; after which, it turned to the counsel for Lady Constance, who had at least the comfort and support of the good wishes, and, so far, of the encouragement of all who heard him. When he began a discussion on the technicalities of law, there was indeed little kindling; but when he proposed to put them all aside, for the sake of common sense and common justice; and when, as he said, he came forward in defence of a noble, but unprotected orphan, whose inheritance it was sought to spoil, and who had nothing to trust to but her natural rights and the shield of the law, all hearts were with him, and the great magistrate on the bench seemed himself to give him his sympathy.

The audience appeared to go along with this feeling, and, but for their sense of decorum, so characteristic of an English court of justice, they were disposed to mark their concurrence by indications which reverence for the administration of the laws, alone forbade.

The adroit counsel, perceiving himself in possession of this vantage ground, pressed upon the great judge the reasonableness and even duty of seizing upon the slightest opening which the law would permit, in furtherance of justice; and as the words heirs and descendants *unmodified*, occurred, that he would, as he might, consider Lady Constance as included in that character, and give judgment accordingly. "But," said the able advocate, warming, "if I am denied this; if this noble and injured lady is to be weighed down and destroyed by technicalities; if an obvious mistake and contradiction (for on such alone does Lord Cleveland depend) is to prevail against the speaking rights of nature, I will abandon the whole deed, with all its provisions, present and remote; I will return it to this great nobleman to be restored to the pure source whence he obtained it; and I will own that it is impossible it should stand, from its blunders and contradictions, which, from beginning to end, baffle all discussion, and must for ever prove fatal to it in a court of law; and then, my Lord," continued the counsel, raising his voice, "what will be the result?" Here the spectators both on the bench, at the bar, and on the crowded floor, became fixed and silent in an anxiety of expectation. But when the advocate added, in a tone of confidence, "The result will be, that Lady Constance must succeed, not only as legatee of her father, but as heir-at-law of her ancestor," a feeling of joy seemed to electrify the audience, and all eyes were turned to the bench to discover, if possible, in the countenance of the judge, the effect of this sudden turn of argument, which appeared to be so favourable.

Assuredly, notwithstanding its labours, there is much to envy in the situation of an advocate—much more in that of a judge; thus to have all eyes, and almost all hearts hanging upon them; not from the tinsel glare which surrounds them while performing their duties, but because of the magnitude of those duties, and the powers and virtues necessary for their fulfilment. That heart must be cold indeed, which can contemplate, without warming, not perhaps the most glorious, but surely one of the most interesting spectacles a great country can

afford, namely, the exertions of eloquence and knowledge, in the cause of invaded rights. We will not enter into the vanity which dictated the ebullition of "*arma cedant togæ*," but in the civilized world, we question whether the proudest puissance of a conqueror holds up a more exciting object for imitation, than the animation of an able advocate, or the clear virtue of a judge engaged in the distribution of impartial justice.

On the present occasion, many were the examples of this powerful influence; for several youths of high hopes were fixed in their professions by what they heard and saw on that memorable day; and all others, for a long time, remembered the thrilling interest of that exciting argument.

It is the duty of a magistrate, however, to have no passions, or at least to act as if he had none. To be sure, the high-chactered lawyer who presided, appeared to be moved by this appeal; but he contented himself with saying there was much cogency in the argument; and then turning to De Vere's counsel, calmly announced that he was prepared to hear him.

But now a fresh subject of interest arose; for the counsel to whom this was addressed, having consulted with his client, who then instantly retired) rose in his place, snd spoke as follows:

"My lord, on the part of the honourable person who has just left the court, I have to declare that he is no willing party to this suit. He, as well as myself, and, I believe I may add, all those who heard the learned counsel who last addressed you (without excepting him who began this unhappy question for a very different claimant,) felt every word of the cogent argument that was adduced against the validity of this deed; and, should the settlement be overturned, my client will be the first to hail that position, as sound, which held that the Lady Constance, the true heir of her father, is also the true heir of her ancestor. Mr. De Vere claims to say, that he is no invader of an orphan's rights. He has been *dragged* before this court, as reluctantly as ever slave was dragged at the wheels of a conqueror, nor would he ever have obeyed the citation, had he not been informed, that

if he declined, the case of this noble lady, so powerful in natural right, was so controlled by the act and intentions of her ancestor, that she never could succed. And then, my lord, should he not have appeared, this rich inheritance would have been decreed to one who could himself have no right but what the technicalities of law would award him. But things are altered. Your lordship is called upon for a decision, which may not be to interpret, but to annihilate the deed on which Lord Cleveland relies; and against this call Mr. De Vere instructs me not to say one word. If such should be your decision, no friend of the Lady Constance, not the Lady Constance herself, nor even her departed father could he now be a witness of what is passing here, could feel more gratification than this gentleman, that the fortune which it was intended should descend upon her, should be confirmed to her for ever, by your lordship's decree."

A buzz of applause at this speech could not be repressed, nor diverted even by the strange gesticulations of Harclai, whose dissent from every word of it was manifested in the strongest manner. The spectators, however, did not partake his feelings; for all were struck with unmixed admiration at the generosity and self-devotion of De Vere; and the case of Constance herself scarcely excited more regard, or more sympathy, than this proceeding, which was characterised as noble, from one end of the court to the other.

The dignified magistrate who presided, looked at first displeased at this invasion of the solemnity of the place; but, at length, having restored order, he was willing, he said, to forgive the interruption, for the sake of the natural admiration which such conduct had excited: "An admiration," continued he, "which I am myself not entirely without; for who can hear these sentiments, or witness this self-denial, and not feel himself moved? It would be well for the world if there were more Mr. De Veres in it; for well has he sustained the high ancestry from which he springs. But not the less am I bound, sitting here, to do impartial justice between all the parties before me; and if I am thus, though a little

prematurely, called upon for an opinion, although merely an interlocutory one, I am obliged to say that I am not prepared to go the length of the counsel for Lady Constance, and pronounce that this deed, with all its faults, is absolutely invalid."

The spectators seemed struck with disappointment at this opinion; and blank looks succeeded to the former animation. Lord Cleveland, however, was full of hope from it, and could not prevent himself from rising, and actually bowing as if in thankfulness to the court.

Without particularly noticing this interruption, the judge called upon De Vere's counsel to state, upon the supposition that the deed could be supported, though Lady Constance's claim under it were to be rejected, what were the grounds of his client's case, as against the claim of the Earl of Cleveland.

The advocate made a short but forcible answer, which he rested entirely on the circumstance that the clause within the body of the deed respecting De Vere as heir male of Lady Eleanor, was quite as technical and unambiguous as that which passed the estates to Lord Cleveland, upon the extinction of the Mowbray titles; and then, these two being contradictory clauses, the preamble was immediately let in, and this decided the matter in favour of De Vere.

It was observed that the judge seemed to go along with every word of this argument. The attention of those present became also more and more intense as it went on; and, at its close, far from any interruption, by observations or otherwise, a silence, peculiarly dead and solemn, tied up every tongue in anxiety for the decision.

The great person who presided had, from the first, formed his opinion, which was only strengthened by the arguments from the bar. He, therefore, at once addressed himself to the case, and as he who writes was present, and took the fullest notes of words the most interesting that friendship ever heard pronounced, it would be with fondness that he would indulge himself in recording at length this memorable decision.

But the subject is exhausted, and he is desirous of sparing the reader's patience. Suffice it, therefore, to

remember the observation of the great magistrate who pronounced the judgment, that though the confusion that hung over this complicated case, disfigured and veiled almost every feature it presented, yet, if he could brush away these disfigurements, and leave a sufficiently fair face to be looked upon afterwards, it was his duty to do so.

"And yet," added he, "I shall do this with mingled sensations of pain and pleasure, if it be permitted to a judge to have pain or pleasure. For though I feel bound to declare my opinion, that this orphan lady cannot succeed, I am equally bound to decide in favour of him whose feeling and lofty conduct this day has done him so much honour."

The friends of De Vere were animated with joy; but the whole court continued to hang in intense and silent attention on the judgment as it proceeded.

The great magistrate then detailed his reasons for pronouncing that Lady Constance could not succeed, which were, in fact, those produced at the bar, provided the deed was not destroyed by its contradictions. These he allowed to be so great that they extinguished one another, so that, if nothing sound remained behind, the whole deed itself would be annihilated, and then the case contended for by Lady Constance's counsel would arise, and her ladyship would succeed as heir at law to Mr. Cleveland.

"But a sound part," continued this upright judge, (in a voice growing peculiarly solemn and impressive,) "a sound part *does* remain, and it is in favour of Mr. De Vere. It has been argued, indeed, at the bar, that no mention is made of him but by implication in the preamble. But looking at the enacting clauses in the body of the deed, I find, that failing the heirs male of Lord Mowbray, the estates are vested in the *heir male* of Lady Eleanor De Vere, which this gentleman is. There is, therefore, abundant room to satisfy the strictest forms of technicality, quite as much so as in the conveyance to Lord Cleveland. Form, therefore, being satisfied in what relates to Mr. De Vere as well as Lord Cleveland, we are allowed to look at the preamble with a view to the intention of the settler; and, if the two

cases are contradictory (which they certainly are,) that intention must decide. But if this be so, nothing can be clearer than these two propositions—first, that a male only, and not a female, can take under this settlement; next, that Mr. De Vere being not only with Lord Cleveland actually included in the technical enactments of the deed, but also (which Lord Cleveland is not,) embraced by the solemn scope of the preamble, it will be too much to say, with such superior weight in his favour, that because Lord Cleveland must fail, Mr. De Vere cannot succeed. Lord Cleveland's claim, no doubt, contradicts Mr. De Vere's as far it goes; and the claim of Mr. De Vere, equally contradicts Lord Cleveland's. The one is upheld by the preamble; the other destroyed by it; yet a call is made upon me to support that which is destroyed, and utterly extinguish that which is supported. This cannot be, and I am bound by my judgment to invest Mr. De Vere with all the rights designed for him by his ancestor.

"Of the noble claimant against whom I am thus forced to pronounce, it would be needless for me to go out of my way to speak. I sit not here to appreciate motives, to take notice of the talk of the world, or to inquire how documents have been discovered. My duty, as my business, is to decide upon those documents when once brought before me. The right of the earl to have his claim investigated, feeble as it is, is incontestible. But thus much I will permit myself to say, that with such palpable proofs of the intention of his ancestor before his eyes, and such plain internal evidence that the re-passing of the estates to the Cleveland name, upon the extinction of the title of Mowbray, was a mere *slip*, and could not mean to disinherit a person so precisely described as the heir male of Lady Eleanor; had the deed been so constituted that technicality, and not justice, had prevailed, it would have cost me a pang to have pronounced judgment in his favour."

It would not be easy to describe the effects of this decree upon those who heard it. The lawyers from the other courts had flocked to listen to it; and they, as well as their clients, neglecting for awhile their own

cases, together with numerous other auditors who had caught the interest it inspired, formed themselves into groupes to canvass its merits or demerits. But the former prevailed; and if there were a thousand friends of Lady Constance who were grieved, there were at least as many of De Vere who rejoiced; but, except by Mr. Graves and his clerks (whose faces were blank enough,) no one seemed to side with the Lord Cleveland.

And now the court began to clear. The higher order of spectators dropped off one by one, and rolled away in their carriages, while the barristers, closing their briefs, discussed the question as they walked home to their chambers. In a few minutes all was tame and vapid, where intense interest had so recently prevailed; and at length, some lingering business of course having been disposed of by a few stragglers, the chief magistrate himself left the bench, preceded by his officers, with his train borne through the hall. A quaint old usher took possession of the seat of justice, in order to arrange its disordered paraphernalia, and turning the key of the door, which he put into his pocket, this illustrious and peopled chamber, which, within so short a time, had resounded to the voice of eloquence, was left a mere ordinary room, deprived of its interests, and consigned for the rest of the day to silence and solitude.

CHAPTER XXV.

I pray you give me leave to go from hence,
I am not well; send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

SHAKSPEARE.

What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?

SHAKSPEARE.

The whole town soon rang with the eventful proceedings which were recorded in the last chapter; for

the groupes which at first had collected in Westminster hall, to discuss the various arguments they had heard, had at length dispersed to different parts of the city, and carried with them every where a report of the discussion they had witnessed.

Lord Cleveland had been among the first to endeavour to depart as soon as he found the decisive bias of the court. But he could not penetrate the throng, and was compelled to hear the concluding observations of the judge. When he did succeed, therefore, in making his way, his resentful feelings had so got the better of him, that he entirely lost the self-command which had once distinguished him under disappointment. He left the court, indeed, swelling with rage, which in vain he attempted to conceal, and moodily answered the mistimed condolences of some of his friends, who embarrassed his retreat, by declaring "That it was a most unrighteous judgment." At that moment the great person himself who had pronounced it came by in all his state, and so little was the earl master of himself, that in return for the salute he received, he flung back a look of defiance, and even went so far as, in no under tone, to accompany it with the word "*upstart.*"

The bystanders, of whom there were many, who witnessed this outrage, for it was no less, were seized with a sort of horror, and Lord Cleveland's immediate acquaintance, to whom he had addressed himself, dropped instantly away. They were afraid of being made parties to what in truth, excited general indignation. The high personage who had been thus grossly affronted, passed on in unresenting dignity at the time, but being not of a temper to submit to such an outrage, not merely upon his person, but his office, a severe retribution was looked for by those who knew the character of both lords. The earl, with this fresh cause of self-blame, was not consoled by his solicitor Graves, who had waited for him, and to whom, thinking he had an important communication to make, he could not deny the audience he asked. But finding that it was merely to discuss the question of costs, which Graves said would, he feared, be enormous, he reprimanded him bitterly for intruding upon him then, and desired that he might hear no more

about any part of the case, nor even see him again till he was sent for.

He then shouldered his way through whole ranks of inferior persons, who still crowded the passages, and annoyed him with looks of vulgar curiosity. Wrought up at last to almost frenzy, he found and entered his carriage, the door of which, his footmen (seemingly catching the rage of their master) closed with hasty violence, and posting home at the full speed of his horses, he ordered himself to be denied to all the world.

The contrast between him and the other defeated party (for Lord Clanellan's interest for his ward was so great that he might almost be thought the real party) was singular. His first impulse was to look for De Vere, with a view to congratulate him; but learning that he had fled from the hall as well as the court, he drove instantly to his lodgings, where he found Mr. Wentworth had been his forerunner.

That attached friend and buoyant man, had watched every look of the expressive countenance of the judge in pronouncing his decree, and had began to move almost before the last words fell from his lips. He was the first out of court, and was, in a few minutes, with his friend.

"Your face," said De Vere, "seems to bring me good tidings: provided *he* has not succeeded I am satisfied."

"*He* had not a chance from the beginning," returned Mr. Wentworth, "but you were ever a Quixote, and I must really set you down for as mad a person, for this reception of a man who comes to give you joy of ten thousand a year. It will at least make good your old devise upon that old crumbling column of yours at Talbois—the almost leafless oak, and '*Insperata floruit.*'"

De Vere was astonished and overjoyed, but he was also dismayed and grieved at the same time.

"That he has failed is well," cried he, "and that I have succeeded ——"

"Is well also," replied Wentworth, without interrupting him; for a pause seemed to come over De Vere as he uttered these words.

"But you are really the most extraordinary personage I ever knew," continued his friend: "a princely fortune falls at your feet, as if from the clouds; and yet you seem not disposed to take the trouble of picking it up."

"Indeed you mistake me," said De Vere; "I am thankful; very thankful." At the same time his countenance accorded so little with the sentiment, that Wentworth, at first astonished, on looking at him, and perceiving him rapt, and intensely serious, began to think him overpowered, and hastily asked if he was not well? "I thought you would have borne this better," said he.

"And yet I bear it well," answered De Vere. "I show no extravagance, I have not attempted to jump out of the window, nor even have I yet embraced you for your kindness in coming so quickly to tell me this news."

He said this still with an air of absence and pensiveness, as if his thoughts were not with his words; and Wentworth was so struck with it, that he could not help telling him, he was either stupified with his good fortune, or that there were things on his mind, which he perhaps should do well to leave to his own management. "If the first," said he, gaily, "I will send for a surgeon to bleed you; if the last, I will come and see you when you are more disposed to see me."

This recovered De Vere from what really had been an abstraction, which had disabled him from receiving his friend as he ought.

"Judge me not so ill," said he, "nor think me so ordinary a person as to be stupified with sudden good fortune. You have ever been so admirable a friend that there is but one objection I can have to unburthening myself to you entirely, and telling you of the cause of the absence I find I have been in.

"And what is that?" asked Wentworth.

"You have never been a lover," answered De Vere, "and by consequence cannot know the feeling occasioned by the knowledge that your own success, half ruins her you love."

A heavy weight seemed removed from De Vere's

heart, by this disclosure of the secret that absorbed him, to one so worthy of his confidence: and perceiving that Wentworth was not recovered from the surprise occasioned by it, he went on—"No! you of the *mens divinior*, who worship power in order to benefit mankind at large, cannot stoop to the little commonwealth of a single heart. You are above the swelling of a lover's wishes, for the well-being of an individual like himself—a mere unit among the millions whom you seek to influence and to govern. But yours, I allow, is the nobler ambition."

"My dear friend," cried Wentworth, kindly, (for De Vere seemed to be still too elevated to come down to the common level of discourse) "why all this? Or, even supposing what you say of my ignorance of the *beautiful passion*, why imagine that I cannot enter into all your feelings, and what I now see, and am glad to understand, is the true key to your apparent apathy."

"Bear with me yet," said De Vere, "for I have still some busy, burning notions, which long to escape, and be embodied in something practical, and which, mounting to my brain, must, I fear, give me an air of stupid ingratitude. But I trust you will excuse it," added he, grasping Wentworth's hand.

"Stupid or ungrateful you never can be," said Wentworth, "but you may be for awhile overcome; and I would leave you to embody these notions you talk of under an intelligible shape, but that I really think I should do you no good by consigning you to yourself. Meantime, I, who know your long cherished, and almost hopeless love for Lady Constance, can easily understand the mixed nature of your present feelings. Your generosity to her electrified the whole court."

"It was too cheap for merit," said De Vere. "Now, indeed,—" and he was relapsing into pensiveness.

"Now, indeed, your restraints are removed," replied Wentworth. "You are free to enter the lists with any man; and if you take my advice, your first step will be to lay this fortune once more at her feet, provided she take *you* along with it."

De Vere shook his head, still looking clouded with doubt. "The proviso," said he, "is dishonourable,

and I would give twice the fortune, did I possess it, could I restore what has been taken from her, without condition."

"Admirable!" said Wentworth, laughing; "and how glorious if she should happen to accept the gold, and reject the lover! How glorious, to be posted upon all the blind walls of the town in a brown paper ballad, as the gentleman who made love to a lady of high degree, with a purse of money which he laid at her feet, and how she put the money into her pocket, and ordered the gentleman to be turned out of doors."

Wentworth was going on in the same strain, when, seeing his friend's countenance working with agitation, so that the veins of his forehead were swollen, and he seemed to breathe with difficulty, he "changed his hand," though he could not "check his pride;" and, with a totally altered voice and manner, said, "My dear fellow, forgive this ill-timed raillery. I see I am wrong, and feel all your honourable purpose. But come into the air, and dissipate for a moment these too swelling aspirations. They are, at present, too much for you."

"Perhaps they are," said De Vere, throwing up the window, when at that moment he beheld his two friends, Lord Clanellan and Harclai, walking to the door.

Wentworth's first impulse was to meet, and stop them from coming in; but he afterwards thought it might give his friend the very diversion he wished for him. Nor was he deceived. The interest which always hung about the marquess, from his connexion with Constance, by giving a powerful excitement to De Vere, recalled his absent senses; and the wild uncouth joy of Harclai, which disdained to conceal itself, either on account of the presence of Wentworth, or the delicacy due to Lord Clanellan, completely succeeded in restoring him to his presence of mind. Wentworth having ascertained this, and thinking there might be subjects between the marquess and his friend which needed no witness, fairly invited Harclai to accompany him in a walk, which, from his respect for him, the humouris-

did not like to refuse, and De Vere was left alone with Lord Clanellan.

The marquess, though far from cast down, nay rejoiced that Lord Cleveland had not succeeded, had on joy in his countenance. He was most sincerely glad that if Constance was doomed to fail, the success should be De Vere's; but he felt, as he ought, the immense substraction of fortune to his beloved pupil. Though his pressure of De Vere's hand, therefore, was hearty enough, and the congratulation he gave him perfectly sincere, there was a gravity on his features which he could not disguise.

De Vere felt a sort of confusion, as if of a guilty person, while he replied to the marquess's compliments; and, strange to say, for the first time in his life, seemed afraid of looking in the face of the person he addressed. At length, breaking silence, he said, "How I wish this whole affair could have been avoided."

"I believe you," replied the marquess, "and to say so, is to say every thing. Need I add, however," (and he sighed as part of the sentence escaped him,) "if our dear Constance is to lose this fine inheritance, my satisfaction that *you* are the person who obtains it?"

"I thank you," said De Vere, with an air of thoughtfulness; "but I am by no means satisfied with the soundness of the decree. It was evident to me that the deed was good for nothing, and then Lady Constance ought to have succeeded. Would to God, that —" and he stopped in evident agitation.

"That what?" asked the marquess with interest.

"That she, that you, that all of whom it concerns, would still so consider it."

The marquess looked amazed, and asked his meaning.

"It is difficult to bring it out," answered De Vere; "difficult to—and yet I have it written here," added he (placing his hand on his breast,) "in characters as plain and intelligible as if they were printed."

The marquess still looked, as he was, in ignorance; though a faint gleam of what was meant, began to open in his mind, and with some suffusion in his countenance

at the magnanimity he suspected, he asked for a more definite explanation.

"I could," said De Vere, still faltering, and now keenly watching the marquess's eye, "not only satisfy real justice, but take a noble revenge on the world."

"What has the world done to offend you?" said Lord Clanellan.

"It has thought me a scoundrel," answered De Vere. "It has dared to suppose that I have appeared to this suit, in order to rob an angel of her own."

"Whoever thought so, could himself only be a robber," replied the marquess. "But my dear De Vere, you are not yourself; your imagination is too raised; your ideas too wild for your judgment: your very eye shows too much fire."

"Will you not aid me then to quench it?"

"By all means, if you will tell me how."

"Restore this fortune, this robbery, to its rightful owner," said De Vere, "and I shall then be restored to my senses."

The marquess was about to reply, but De Vere continued—"Yes! I shall then convince an unjust world, and Lady Constance herself, if ever she imagined such a thing. But no! that heavenly mind is too pure and single in itself, to imagine aught against another without proof." He again paused, but the marquess, willing to hear him out, would not now interrupt him."

"I can convince them all," continued De Vere, with great elevation, "that it never was my design to feed upon an orphan's substance, which is even now mine only through the imperfection of law."

"I now understand your generous purpose," said Lord Clanellan, "and as guardian to Lady Constance, my heart thanks you for it. But on her part, have a care, lest the heavenly mind you talk of, should not equally reject an advantage which might also be hers, only by the imperfection of law. The true measure of all this difficulty, is the intention of him who made the settlement; and supposing that to point at *you*, had it been really set aside only from defects in technicality, could Lady Constance, think you, any more than yourself, submit to succeed against the unequivocal inten-

tion of your common ancestor? While I give you, therefore, all the admiration you deserve for this feeling, be assured I will never affront a mind as generous as your own, by laying your desire before her, as a proposal to be answered; though such an intention ought not, and will not, be lost upon her, any more than upon the world."

"Nay," cried De Vere, now in most agitated alarm; "this must not be. Never will I consent to be held up to man, or to woman, as a person who professed a purpose which he knew could not be effected; and if you, with your cool judgment, tell me even as guardian to Lady Constance, that you cannot and will not, aid me in my desire, I request, I insist, nay I exact it, marquess, of your honour, that you will not expose me to the meanest of all suspicions, that of a design to acquire credit for a disinterestedness which never was in danger."

De Vere said this with warmth, and almost with heat. He grasped the marquess's hand, which he pressed violently with both of his, as he added, "Promise me this, and you will be the noble friend I have always thought you. Refuse it, and I will ever set you down as my cruellest enemy."

The marquess was much moved. He had admired De Vere before, for his unparalleled generosity; he admired him more now for his genuine magnanimity. Yet was he in a difficulty how to reply. He felt the call so energetically made upon him, he felt that if he complied, and gave the promise exacted, he must keep it. The marquess was neither casuist nor sophist; he was an honest man, and as such he knew what would be right; and having preserved his truth for fifty years, he was not now going to tamper with it. But he felt also that it would be most unfair for De Vere, considering what had been the talk of the world, and particularly unfair upon him in respect to Constance, to conceal from every one the nobleness he had displayed. He therefore hesitated, and while De Vere hung upon his answer in expectation almost breathless.

"It would be easy," he observed, "to evade the question you put so home to me, or, if I gave the pro-

mise, to elude it. But I am not a person who have mental reserves, and I will never bind myself to surrender my discretion, in the power of doing justice to one who so deserves it. Surely," added he, perceiving a sort of anger in De Vere's countenance. "I may pretend to sufficient character with you to be trusted with your delicacy, as well as with your honour, and you must not take it ill if I request to be so trusted."

It was some time before De Vere could reply, so deeply did he seem to brood over what pressed upon him. At length, with some effort, he ejaculated, "We differ wide as the poles; I know not your design; but if you give me not this promise, I am ruined."

"My dear De Vere," replied the marquess, "compose yourself, nor fancy design where there is none. Think only, that a man of prudence as well as honour, does not unnecessarily fetter the future; and trust that a person who is twice your age, and who loves you, will not easily be brought to do you harm. But I must leave you, to inform my poor Constance of the events of the day. Poor indeed she is not, cannot be, while so rich in principle. For I know that had she succeeded and even Lord Cleveland had been supposed the rightful heir to these estates, she never would have enjoyed them."

So saying, he embraced De Vere, with many professions of regard and esteem, which he was most sincere in saying had been much raised by his conduct on this trying occasion.

CHAPTER XXVI.

RESIGNATION.

Mine ear is open, and my heart prepared.
The worst is worldly loss, thou canst unfold.
Say, is my kingdom lost? Why, 'twas my care,
And what loss is it to be rid of care?

SHAKSPEARE.

On the marquess's quitting him, De Vere's first impulse was to be himself the bearer of the tidings of his

success to his mother. But his mother was with Constance, and Constance he was absolutely afraid to see.

"No!" said he, "my visit would be one of triumph, of insult; and sooner would I personally carry the news of my defeat."

Exclusive of this, he had a thousand people too see, a thousand matters of business to settle, and had Lady Eleanor been alone at Talbois, he scarcely could have left his post. He sat down, therefore, to write a long detailed account of the proceedings in court; which was much diverted, it must be owned, by long digressions into his own feelings and views of futurity; and of these, he felt so little satisfied, that he was often tempted to renounce his task in despair. He finished it, however, and then liked it so little, that he tore it in pieces at the end of a full hour's work, and contented himself with a communication of scarcely greater length than a note.

Short as it was, it was all that his mother and cousin were destined to receive; for another plan of communication, devised by the kindness of Lord and Lady Clanellan, was rendered abortive by events to which we shall presently come.

The first lines of Mortimer's note, produced agitation in both ladies; for as they had no secrets, though of interests apparently so opposite, Lady Eleanor read it aloud.

"It has pleased Providence," said the note, "that Lord Cleveland should be defeated, and that we—oh! my dear mother, prepare yourself for a trial which, from my own feelings, I know will be a severe one."

Lady Eleanor immediately paused, and with concern exclaimed, "Does he then think defeat disappointment? And does he bear it so ill? Can this be De Vere? Can it be my son?"

"Judge him not too quickly," said Constance, "but proceed; my cousin will assuredly rise superior to any trial he can have."

She said this with an anxiety for the event, which proved that she too expected to undergo a trial, though it arose from any thing rather than fear about her fortune.

When her aunt however resumed, and dropped her voice as she read, and her cheek became flushed, and her features moved, Constance with firmness cried out.

"Unfold this, whatever it be, my dear aunt. It is quite enough that Lord Cleveland has failed. For any thing else I am fully prepared."

"I know all your noble nature," replied Lady Eleanor; "but I own, with all our preparation, I expected not, as Mortimer himself says, that any one of our house should have struck this blow.—Ah! what injustice have I done my son!"

Constance, with unabated firmness, took the letter from her aunt's hand, and read as follows:

"Yes! the decree is in our favour; and it must be a trial to you, as well as to me, to think that we are the unwitting, and surely the unwilling instruments of rending (I still think against justice, if not against law,) the fairest part of her inheritance from such a being as Constance."

"And if I am to lose it," said Constance, cheerfully, "does he think I can repine—nay, that I do not even rejoice that you, my dear aunt, are to profit by it?"

"Were the thing clear!" answered her aunt, "but you see he thinks otherwise," and Lady Eleanor seemed much lost in the reflection.

Constance, however, went on.

"The thought," continued the letter, "is hateful to me, nor shall I ever rest till wrong is set right. It will be my heart's glory to repair this injustice. The world shall never say that I instigated this suit; that I am a calculating, deliberate invader, like Cleveland."

"Ah!" said Constance, overpowered, "I now see what he meant when he talked of the injustice of the world, and said he would take a noble revenge."

She hastily looked for more, but the letter was finished; it only added that Mortimer would write more at large the next day.

Contending emotions disabled both ladies from the farther communication of their thoughts, for Lady Eleanor was scarcely less possessed. She, too, reflected

upon the altered state of her son; and her first feeling was to wonder, but with reverence, at the ways of Providence. She felt deeply for her niece; had a thousand doubts in the want of information, as to the realities of the case. She knew not what to believe, to think, or to wish. All that was certain was, that while she participated his feelings, she was filled with admiration at the designs of her son. Ever was he generous and noble-minded, thought she; ever above a suspicion of selfishness; from his birth upwards have I honoured him, and how does he now deserve it!

Such was the mental, though silent reflection of this enviable mother; enviable, surely, in these sentiments, however romantic, perhaps foolish, and certainly impracticable, the designs which prompted them.

By a sort of tacit agreement these two amiable women now separated. It was even necessary—with such contending feelings, as well as such different interests—that each, for some minutes at least, should be alone.

Constance retired to her cabinet, and certainly the crisis she was in was such as a young women is seldom destined to undergo. It was of a nature different at least from what most young women *do* undergo. Love, the universal passion, the usual causer of the agitations which young persons feel, was not here in question; or, if it was, it was under a shape very different from that which it generally assumes. Filial anxiety, the next distinguishing, and perhaps most respectable source of an unmarried woman's interest was no longer the source of uneasiness. Ambition which has oftener rendered the sex hateful than amiable; and personal rivalry, which has too often rendered it ridiculous; these were not here. Yet, for all this, the interest was powerful, and the thirst for information intense.

We have described Constance as not insensible to the elegancies and superiorities of life, and the loss of above half her means of enjoying them, was, perhaps, not unthought of. But she was still more alive to other and more noble considerations. Wealth, which had hitherto done every thing for her senses, and nothing for her heart, had failed too pointedly as an instrument of happi-

ness, to make her consider its diminution as a very sore evil.

Then as to the appropriation of the fortune she had lost, it was consolation to think that the person she most feared and most disliked had been defeated in his attempt; while he on whom, for his virtues (to say nothing of other pretensions,) she would willingly have bestowed half that fortune (could he have accepted it,) now succeeded to it as his own. However all this might be, although, when she surveyed the vast precinct of her domain, she showed some anxiety as to her future power of supporting its magnificence, yet it as often subsided into resignation; till at length she settled into that calm dignity, of which it was not easy for any change of circumstances to deprive her.

Her thoughts, however, were much in London, and the day lingered slowly, from the want of those details which it was expected the next morning's post would furnish. Nor was expectation disappointed; the amplest, letters arrived, both from Lord Clanellan and De Vere, and each Lady retired with her respective packet to her chamber.

Never was report so devoured as that of Lord Clanellan. And it deserved to be so; for though the subject was intricate, the clearness of Lord Clanellan made it easy, and his report was fidelity itself. The whole court, therefore, rose before the imagination of Constance; the ingenuity of counsel; the arguments of the judge; the interest of the by-standers; the sympathy she had inspired; the execration of Cleveland, and the admiration of De Vere! All these by turns affected her powerfully, and she felt kindly grateful to her own advocate for the manner of his defence. But when she came to the conduct of De Vere, and the speech of his counsel, made by his instruction, she could no longer restrain her feelings, but gave way to them in a torrent of tenderness, in which the real event of the cause was thrown far into shade, and her own great loss entirely forgotten.

Luckily for her no meddling neighbour or officious menial, no scandal-loving visiter, or even Miss Melli-

lot herself, surprised her in this overpowering moment. Had they done so, these precious tears, which arose from fulness of gratitude (may we not add of affection?) alone, would every one of them, as they fell, have been set down to the effects of a reverse which she was not able to bear. Not all the tender nature of Constance; not her sensibility to generous treatment; not her own perfect disinterestedness, nor estimation of it in others; could ever have cleared her from this imputation, had such an accident happened. Such is the world; and yet, as upon more occasions than one we have asserted, it is, upon the whole, a good world. But for all this, I am glad the accident did not happen.

It was full an hour before she saw any one: and then only, when ringing for a servant, she sent her guardian's packet to Lady Eleanor.

Lady Eleanor was instantly, and almost as much absorbed as her niece. She, too, was affected with the conduct of her son, and felt a lofty sort of joy to find it had been so approved. But her sympathy for the adverse fate of Constance, gave her no shock. In which if any one imagine it was because she felt herself of the winning party, little fit is it that he contemplate these characters. Yet much did she rejoice in the event for De Vere. "It will give him," said she proudly, "a right to assert the desire of his heart."

To do this she thought was enough; for besides her having for some time past suspected that Constance, even without being wooed, was not indifferent to her son, no woman, she thought, who really was wooed by him, could fail of being won.

These attached relations now again met, each of them more composed. Lady Eleanor's last notion gave her an air of even unusual fondness towards Constance, who felt it almost as much as if she had divined its cause. But she set it down to her aunt's concern for her, nor rejected it the less because it arose, as she thought, from sympathy.

"And yet, my dear aunt," said she, "you must not suppose I stand in need of comfort, because I am not to enjoy that, which it is plain, whatever Mortimer may think, never was designed for, and therefore never

belonged to me. But even if it had, and I had lost it, what has wealth done for me, but increase my cares? From the first, I felt that I should not know how to use it; and while it was only expected, to how many trials did it expose me? But it is ridiculous to talk of being indifferent to wealth, with this castle over my head. If I want to moralize, I should go to the Dairy House."

She said this cheerfully, and to the Dairy House she went.

Never did its modest elegance look so pleasing, its garden so neat, its brook so tranquil. She threw herself into a chair, courted all its sights and sounds, and passed full an hour in silent reverie, in which the past was given to oblivion, and the present, or rather the immediate future, far from darkening in its prospect, floated in airy vision through her mind. And if in this visionary contemplation, the associations inspired by the place took possession of her, and she thought much of her cousin; if she afterwards ran rapidly through all their intercourse together; and, though she could fix upon little positive to prove that he loved her, if she found still less to show that he was indifferent; if, with all her modesty, she did this, I say, let those blame her, if they can, who, being as pure, are, at the same time, as natural.

In this absorbing, though quiet occupation, her interest was only changed, not diminished by this visit to her pleasant retreat. The minutes seemed to fly; nor do we know how long she would have remained thus, had not a servant sought her to say, that an avant courier had arrived from Lady Clanellan, announcing that she would be at the castle to dinner. This was news that could not be neglected; but it dissipated a reverie in which some trouble mingled itself with sweetness, but in which the sweetness greatly predominated.

CHAPTER XXVII.

POLITICAL CHANGE.

I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man comes to good.

SHAKSPEARE.

We come now to very different matters. The affection which Lord and Lady Clanellan bore their ward, would not let them rest, from the moment of the decision of the court, until they had resolved to join her at Castle Mowbray. To be sure every thing in the shape of information, had been given by the marquess in his ample despatch: but on conversing with his wife, this was not deemed enough by either.

"She will not need us, as supports," said Lady Clanellan, "but there are a thousand little explanations—a thousand tacit attentions, which she will feel as comforts; to say nothing of plans for the future, on which she may want to consult us."

"You speak like yourself, Caroline," said the marquess, "and we will set off as soon as you can get ready."

"That may be this evening," replied the marchioness; "we can sleep on the road, and we shall gain several stages."

"Which in a journey of friendship is gaining much," added the marquess. The marquess was, however, obliged to allow his lady to travel alone.

His trunks were already in the hall; the carriage ordered round, and himself giving some last directions, when a gentleman from Lord Oldcastle delivered him a note, entreating him to come to him on an affair with Lord Cleveland, of the last consequence. Incompatible as this was with his plan for Castle Mowbray, he could not refuse, especially as, considering the recent occurrence, and the character of the party, he thought it might relate to his own situation of guardian to Lady

Constance. Settling therefore with Lady Clanellan that he would return as soon as possible, so as yet to leave town that night, he repaired with all speed to Lord Oldcastle.

What was his surprise to find that a storm had risen from Lord Cleveland's quarter, threatening the rupture of the administration itself, though taking its origin only in the private law suit to which he had just been a party.

We have related the outrageous insult given by Lord Cleveland, immediately after the decree was pronounced, to the great magistrate who had pronounced it. The high personal character of this judge could not brook such an affront, though his sense of the dignity of his place would not permit him personally to notice it. But he drove instantly to the king, and requesting an audience, laid before him the time, manner, and place of the outrage, and the occasion out of which it arose; and the whole statement, though perfectly faithful, contained little creditable to the character of Lord Cleveland.

The great personage to whom this appeal was made, yielded to no one in his dominions in respect for the laws, and the administrators of the laws; insomuch that it has sometimes, jocularly perhaps, but truly been said, that he had as much veneration for the constable's staff, as for the sceptre itself. More seriously, his own high, strict, and uniform sense of justice, was almost proverbial, so that if surnames were still a fashion in history, the JUST might be justly given to this exemplary sovereign. Of all other minds, therefore, his was most open to impression from the facts laid before him. In the present instance, he promised to rebuke the offending party as he deserved, and he kept his promise.

Being one of the greatest officers of the crown, Lord Cleveland, notwithstanding the temper he was in, could not disobey a summons which was instantly sent to him, and to his astonishment, he had to sustain a sharp, though dignified reproach for his disrespect to the great functionary he had insulted, and not a little blame for his private conduct towards his orphan relation. Both

censures fell the heavier upon him, from the immaculateness, on these, and indeed on all points, of the rebuking party.

Lord Cleveland knew he could set up no defence which could escape the penetration of his clear-sighted master; peculiarly clear as well as fervid and sincere in the moral code between man and man. But, exclusive of this, he could not reply upon his sovereign; and he left the closet, stung to the quick by censures which, while he felt they were deserved, were so far from humbling him, that he vowed revenge for the affront they had given to his pride, and this revenge he was resolved to wreak that instant upon the author of his mortification. His resentment was so vehement that he related the affair, with his own colouring, to one or two nobles of the court, to whom he was so off his guard as to declare that he would resign his place unless the king made him an apology. He then sought and found Lord Oldcastle, to whom he complained bitterly of this conduct of their associate, whose instant dismissal he insisted upon; declaring that, if it was not complied with, he would himself resign, and pass with his whole force into the ranks of opposition.

We may suppose the alarm which this occasioned to a minister of the character of Lord Oldcastle. The feelings of the complaining party were too hot to admit of soothing, and his own habits of trimming, too well known to give room for cajolery. Ay or no was insisted upon; a profession of want of power, scouted; the impossibility of facing their common master with such a proposition, despised! the plea of the high character of the individual threatened, and his great and eminent services, laughed, at.

"In short," said the earl, with an outward coolness, little according with the turbulence within, "you know my resolve in regard to this man: to-morrow must decide for him or for me."

Lord Oldcastle was left mute with amazement. He consulted his son Eustace, who was in the house, and who gave him spirited advice, which he said he would consider; but he first resolved to confer with some fo

the leading friends of government, and particularly those who happened to be ranged with Lord Cleveland, under the title of king's friends. In the first rank of these was Lord Clanellan, and hence the summons we have just related.

We may suppose the wonder of the marquess at the news communicated to him; and he was not the less moved by it from the consideration that he was here again about to meet Lord Cleveland as an opponent. He, however, gave his opinion with the clear firmness which belonged to him, and it was, that Lord Cleveland's terms should not be complied with. "The injustice of them would alone," said he, "sway me to this;" an argument which did not entirely convince Lord Oldcastle; but when he added that if Lord Cleveland executed his threat, it would ruin him with his master for ever, the minister confessed there was much in the advice.

The conference lasted, and prevented the departure of Lady Clanellan for Castle Mowbray that night; and as Lord Oldcastle had entreated the marquess not to be absent from London till this vital affair was settled he immediately acceded to the proposal of his kind-hearted wife, that she should not lose time in visiting her young friend; and promising to follow, he allowed her to set out alone.

The next day was big with importance, I had almost said with fate, to Lord Oldcastle. For, far from waiting quiescently for the effects of Lord Cleveland's threat, his great law coadjutor, upon being informed of it immediately tendered his own resignation unless Lord Cleveland was himself dismissed. Every eye therefore, was turned upon this crisis, which could not be concealed with all the different interests which the different passions of hope, fear, revenge, and ambition, could inspire.

It was now that Lord Oldcastle showed himself decidedly unequal to his situation. Within his own camp was mutiny; without an active and pressing enemy: for Wentworth, who had never given him rest, profited by this weakness to assail him with all his force.

It was evident he was falling, and many were the desertions.

Having decided for his law colleague, he delayed imparting the decision; and when he did impart it, found it was too late. The great functionary was already in treaty with Mr. Wentworth, with whose principles he entirely agreed; while, on the other hand, the same delay had produced the resignation of Cleveland. Every thing was confusion, hopelessness, and terror; and Lord Oldcastle, rather than be dashed to pieces in the storm, resigned the helm.

Nothing could be more ill-timed than all this, for the views, the hopes, and the wishes of De Vere. He was impatient; he panted to get to Castle Mowbray, but he had already found that he had become a man of to much consequence to be his own master. The Yorkshire estates to which he had succeeded, conferred all the political influence which had belonged to Lord Mowbray. As this was known, he was courted on all sides, and his table was covered with the cards of men, many of them of the first consideration, who came to congratulate and renew their acquaintance with him. Among these was the name of William Flowerdale, and (believe it who will) that of William Clayton, which last gave De Vere a feeling of sickness when he saw it.

And yet, but for the supremeness of the contempt in which De Vere held Clayton, he could now have viewed him with pity. Consummate as had been his disguises, a character like his could not for [illegible]r be concealed. He had smiled, and smiled and yet by some was at last thought a villain. The world judges too often suddenly, and judges wrong; but in the end, it will judge rightly, when the truth is before it. The real treatment of De Vere by Clayton could not continue to be smothered as it had been. The free talk of Cleveland himself revealed it. In the plenitude and insolence of his power, he kept no measures with this unhappy dependant. He was in the habit of speaking contumeliously of serious things, and the gravest characters. Could he spare one for whom he had so little respect? He had a language of his own

upon these occasions; and to call Clayton his man, his major domo, and sometimes his tool, and his time-server, was hazarded with as much impunity as effrontery.

The sensibilities of the secretary had become vapid and even ridiculous to every body; he met with no sympathy, and felt his bondage, but could not break it, for he had not a pound in the world. Notwithstanding this misery, therefore, the resignation of his patron, although it released him from thraldom, was a cruel blow—crueller than it appeared. He had for some time given much of his attention to the subject of marriage. He considered it (not exactly as some visionary persons perhaps consider it, as a mean of happiness) but as an instrument of success in any pursuit you might be upon. The Parvenu at present, had not less than three; the possession of beauty, of wealth, and of high connection; all of them peculiarly to be promoted by marriage. Accordingly, three corresponding objects presented themselves to his wishes in the persons of three ladies. One, an amiable girl, had moved his susceptibility, and he might be said to be in love. But she had neither fortune nor rank, and his love was quelled. Another had riches, and he bowed at her shrine; but the shrine was in the city, and not even of the aristocratic part of it. He visited, indeed, in Bread Street, but always in secret, and liked it too little to repeat it often. A third was an earl's daughter, and though she was without fortune, and her father without power, his love of fashion prevailed, and he was at least received into the family as a contingent good match. But the destruction of the ministry blew up his fortunes, and he was politely desired by his intended father-in-law, to discontinue his visits. He appealed to Lady Jane, but Lady Jane was too good a daughter to have a will of her own. He betook himself instantly to Cheapside, and renewed his advances, but his other treaty having been discovered, he met with a flat denial. Thus denuded, friendless, pennyless, hopeless, execrated by his inferiors, laughed at by his superiors, and despised by his equals, he ventured to appear before Lord Cleveland in one of his moodiest moments.

Being asked his business, in a tone little friendly, he

came, he said, humbly to beg advice how he was to dispose of himself.

"Hang yourself," was the answer; "it is the only thing left you;" and the earl turned upon his heel.

"There is still my seat in parliament," said Clayton, almost trembling.

"Which you may keep for three weeks," replied his comforter. "It will take about that time to dissolve, which the new ministry will of course determine upon, as soon as they are settled."

Clayton's heart sunk; his lip quivered, and, in sheer despair, he talked of hoping for some reward for service, and even stammered out (as is believed, for it is not certain) something about attachment. The misanthropy of the earl enjoyed this meanness; for he knew how much, as well as how justly he was detested by the practiser of it.

"My good Clayton," said he, in a tone indescribably ironical, "I agree with you, attachment ought to be rewarded, but I have not the means. If you really want reward for attachment, I would advise you to go to De Vere; he is grateful, and generous, and is now rich."

The measure of misery was full. The earl had torn Clayton's heart to pieces, as he himself had torn that of many others—his inferiors or confiding equals. He left the room without reply, and insolently as he had been treated, when he looked at his patron's fine hall on quitting it, and felt that he never should see it again, he actually shed tears.

With not much hope, he repaired to Lord Oldcastle, who said he was too busy to see him, and referred him to Mr. Grantley. Mr. Grantley referred him to one of his clerks. Too proud, fallen as he was, to talk of his wants to one whom, in common with most others, he had made his enemy, he declined this last reference. He afterwards met Lord Oldcastle and Mr. Grantley in the park; but they crossed into another walk, and did not or would not look at him. He repaired to the House. But the House was thin; and the few who were there, were talking of the new minister, Mr. Wentworth. There was neither leisure, nor disposi-

tion to think of *him*; and the two or three scattered underlings whom he did meet, shunned him with coldness, as a follower of Lord Cleveland.

Thus cast off, and in the very lowest state of mortification, he felt banished and lonely, though in the midst of a crowd, and envied every busy, occupied face which he saw; while the sight of the carriages of his acquaintance, who rolled by him in evident indifference, gave him the cruellest pangs. As a last resource he left his name, as has been said, with De Vere—hoping little, expecting nothing—but he left it. Not finding him, he wrote him a short note, announcing first to him (as he said was but his duty,) his intention to ask for the Chiltern Hundreds, and vacate Wellsbury. He did this from a double motive. First, because he felt sure, in a few weeks at most, of being turned out; next, to make a merit of it with De Vere, whom it was now so much his interest to conciliate.

De Vere, whose disgust was irrecoverable, drily accepted the resignation, and a new election was soon impending.

The honest burghers of Wellsbury were stupified by the late events. The resignation and death of Lord Mowbray had not been much felt, while Clayton remained and represented a still greater man in Lord Cleveland. But the fall of this second patron, and the extinction of their old representation altogether, left them in amazement. The town clerk's (that is Lord Cleveland's) party were literally, to use their own expression, "dumb founded." They tried to make a stand, and the purse of Lord Cleveland would not have been wanting, had there been a reasonable prospect of success. But De Vere's late purchases, the returning attachment to his name, and above all the change of government, had so strengthened his party, as to prove to the prudent earl, that he had no chance whatever, and he therefore very wisely cut off the supplies. The town clerk made a journey to London to alter his resolution if he could. He was received with bare civility, and showing some symptoms of rebellion (being as we have observed, of a sturdy, churlish disposition) was turned out of doors. This would never have happened, had not

the calculating earl proved to himself that he never more could have footing in the borough. He therefore felt full license to deal with a subaltern instrument as it listed him, and it listed him to make good that terrifying axiom of criminal ambition—

> "Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume
> "To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds
> "They're thrown neglected by;—but if it fails,
> "They're sure to die like dogs, as you shall do."

Mr. Blakeney vowed revenge, but could not help himself, and after perseveringly beating up for a volunteer candidate, fairly offered himself to De Vere, who gave him a peremptory refusal. It is needless to add, that De Vere was elected without opposition; a success which gave him the more solid pleasure, because, from his still fostered feelings with regard to the Cleveland estates, the doubt which hung over that brilliant acquisition, secret as it might be to the world, still paralyzed many of his resolutions.

As to Clayton, not wishing too often to return to a disagreeable subject, we will here close his eventful career. Every hope in public life had passed by him from the decline of his favour with Lord Cleveland, who as we have seen, had used and left him; so that he was literally starved into an application for bread to some of his relations whom he had grosely neglected. Whether to revenge this, or from ignorance in his benevolence, one of them, a broker in the city, offered to take him into partnership. The notion almost drove him mad, and he shrank from it to consult Roebuck, the political prioter. Roebuck advised him to attend the gallery of the House of Commons, and report debates. This was ten times worse. At length he made an offer of his services, as a tutor for his children, to a fashionable banker, to whom he had once shown some official civility; and who, on learning his situation, accepted and established him in his house. There he thought he could at least share a life of opulence, and live still amidst good company. But unlooked-for mortifications awaited him, worse than any he could have foreseen. His patron moved in the very focus of that society in which Clayton had shone (or thought he had

shone) as an equal, or higher than an equal. He was now to be content to mingle with them on sufferance; to stand unnoticed, where he had formerly taken a lead; and to be passed by, at first with compassionate recognition, at last in silent and total neglect. At table, where his business was only to carve, never to speak, he often saw the companions of his former life, still revelling in the sunshine of present honour and future hope. With these, however intimately he had formerly mixed with them, he felt that he was to mix no more; nor could he even bear their discourse, which was on the subjects of his former glory, the great state parties, the assemblies of fine people, and the marriages of fashionable beauties. This was always sure to send him away in bitterness, to reminiscence, and misery; and the aristocratic stiffness of Mr. Freshville, and the Misses Partridge, who, on learning his situation, entirely let him drop, cost him several nights' sleep. At length a baleful envy seized upon his heart, which sickened to its core. He balanced about giving up what was now his only chance for bread, but his daily misery conquered, and he resigned his charge, which his patron did not press him to retain. As a last resource, he threw himself upon the charity of De Vere, who refused to admit him to his presence, but relieved his immediate necessity, and at last obtained for him a small place in the Excise, in a distant port in Scotland. There, amidst the fumes of herring, ling, and tobacco, which it was his wretched duty to supervise, and in the society of men as polished, to use a phrase of Congreve, as a Dutch Skipper from a whale fishery, he lingered out a mortified existence. For there, without that last clinging comfort of the virtuous unfortunate, which misfortune itself cannot take from them, a sense that their lot is undeserved, and will be recompensed hereafter, he dreamt (and perhaps still dreams) away life in unhappy recollections of the past, only made more bitter from a contrast with the present.

Let no one suppose that these details are without their use. In the world there always are, and always will be, some instances of what may be called successful villainy; but a gentlemanly honour pervades by far

the greater number of those with whom Clayton had attempted to make his way, and who, in the language of the old admonitory column at Talbois,

> "Most of all eschew,
> "To trust in Parvenu."

This honour will, sooner or later, assert itself, and the false friend and time-serving hypocrite may surely reckon upon being ultimately discovered. But still more useful is this history for the lesson it affords, that an ill-disciplined mind, influenced by a bad ambition, is always made the instrument of its own punishment, though it never can suffice to its own recovery.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MINISTERIAL CARE.

> But in a gross brain, little wots
> What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace
> Whose hours the peasant most advantages.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

> Your grace shall pardon me;
> I am too high born to be property'd;
> To be a secondary at control,
> Or useful serving man.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

THE appointment of Mr. Wentworth to the ministry, gave an entire new face to the political world. High matters were in agitation, fraught with nothing less than a nation's weal; and perhaps there could not be a prouder point of pre-eminence than that on which Mr. Wentworth stood. It is the observation of D'Alembert that high office is like a pyramid: only two sorts of animals reach the top—reptiles, and eagles. Mr. Wentworth was, at least, no reptile. He had scarcely ever served in subordinate office; he had always disdained what is called a patron, and from his entry into parliament, he burst forth ten thousand strong.

To the present height and summit of his fortune, he had advanced, impelled by all the motives which could really make ambition virtue; a sincere love of country; a perfect disinterestedness, and a most ineffable contempt for all mean arts in the acquisition of power. He had advanced from his personal qualities and abilities alone; he represented no great families; and was the organ of no anomalous oligarchy that sought to control the king. At the same time, he had advanced through the favour of the nation at large, as well as of his sovereign. By this, we do not mean what is vulgarly called the people; but that which is really so, the majority of all ranks, forming a happy amalgamation of the numerous parties which had hitherto divided and afflicted the state. The necessity for new maxims of government had long been felt; and those who agreed in nothing else, agreed in this, that a sincere regeneration was absolutely wanting, to save the country from the progress of a corruption which was extending to its vitals. Mr. Wentworth thus seemed to unite all suffrages, in the hope which was now entertained, that he was destined to the accomplishment of this happy work. Proud and enviable situation! the holder of which is the real darling of history, before whom Cæsar and Alexander sink to nothing.

We may suppose how much Wentworth's appointment rejoiced the patriotic spirit of De Vere. It must be owned, however, that a time might have been found more opportune for that spirit to display itself. In truth, as we have said, he sickened, he panted to be at Talbois, and had almost shaken off his lawyers, when this critical event imprisoned him for some time longer.

Exclusive of his warm intimacy with the new minister, and all his zeal for the country, which this appointment kindled anew, the late decision had made De Vere a man of immense consequence in the political world. This circumstance did not create, but it certainly did not diminish the desire of the new minister to number him among his public supporters, as well as his private friends. He, indeed, wrote to him a very few hours after he had quitted the closet, and his note

proves how little necessary it is that because a man is a minister, he should forget that he is a friend.

After acquainting De Vere with his appointment, "I little thought," said he, "that our Pyrenean dreams might be realized; or, at least, so soon. Come to me, I beseech you; for, far from being elated, I am heavy, and alarmed, and want your support. I know where your heart is, and how mean all this must appear to 'Signor Love;' but come to me, even though she may expect you, and your foot be in the stirrup."

De Vere's foot was not in the stirrup, nor did he know that he was expected; but his heart was where Wentworth thought it. The news, however, which was announced, was too auspicious for him to refuse such a summons, and a few minutes placed him by the side of his friend.

He found him different from what most would have expected, considering his new-born greatness. For though he had an excited air, it was rather serious and determined, than elevated or joyous. He had been pleased with his reception by the king, and he had a mountain of letters before him, all containing congratulations and professions, some of them, however, accompanied by conditions which did not please him.

"That I should acquaint you, among the first, with this event," said he, "is but natural; and this I should have done, had you been still the same powerless but high-minded De Vere, who, however disposed to turn shepherd himself, would not let me do so. But the situations of both are altered, and the Pyrenean valleys, and Rivers, and Zerlina, and even Lady Constance, must be forgotten for a time, in a very different scene. The country needs us, and we must obey."

De Vere was expressing his pleasure at the new prospect that was opening, when Wentworth continued—

"And yet I feel, I know not what sort of alarm, at the difficulties that present themselves to a man who is determined to rest upon his principles, rather than upon management, for success. Upon your own support I know I can rely, because it is upon those principles, setting aside our friendship, that alone I ask it."

"This is as it should be," said De Vere, "and

whatever power I may have (for I scarcely yet know what it is,) you may suppose you do not confide in it in vain."

"*Pro me*," replied Wentworth, with great emphasis (for his seriousness seemed to increase,) "*Pro me, si recte agam, sin aliter in me.*"

"Agreed," answered De Vere, "and may the government of every minister be like that of the great man* who uttered that sentiment."

"Yet Lord Oldcastle would think it visionary," said Wentworth, "and Walpole would despise it, as wanting in knowledge of the world. I am told, too, that your old friend and Nestor, Sir William Flowerdale, shakes his head, 'and by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,' augurs nothing good of the expected new system. He has even talked of retiring, which I am sorry for, but perhaps from your intimacy, you know all this."

"I am ashamed to say how long it is since I have seen him," replied De Vere; "but I will seek him out; his remarks may be of use."

"Try him," said Wentworth, "and tell him how much I wish his help where he is, and if you break no confidence, make report. At any rate, I am determined to try their boasted tact by another touchstone. I will at least make the momentous experiment, and prove whether a whole nation can be so plunged in corruption, as not to be governed, except by the corrupt."

"This too is as it should be," said De Vere.

"And yet, my friend," returned Wentworth with earnestness, "I am myself almost appalled at what I have undertaken; for whatever people may think, or write, of the selfishness of ambition, what I feel at this moment tells me it is a very different thing."

"I believe you," said De Vere, observing Wentworth seriously moved.

"And you are one of the very few men," said Wentworth, "whom *I* would believe, when they told me that they believed *me* on such a subject. For how many

* The Emperor Trajan.

flatterers would say the same, and yet feel sure that I sought for power solely for my own purposes."

"They can only be of the common herd who would think so, at least if they knew you;" said De Vere.

"And yet," said Wentworth, "how few but those who have themselves borne the burthen, know what they encounter, when they undertake a nation's welfare: what difficulties there are to manage; what parties to please; what jars to reconcile, spirits to assuage, and combinations to disarm. Even our friends sometimes weigh us down, by the very acts which they intend should support us. What mischiefs did the Tory government of Queen Anne, experience from the Tories themselves?* Even envy lurks among these friends, and, sooner or later, like a serpent among flowers, stings us to death while in seeming security."

De Vere felt this from his own experience, and was much moved with the earnestness of the complaint, which he allowed was but too well founded.

"If it is so," said Wentworth, "what, in the way of self-interest, can compensate, to a minister, the total sacrifice of his ease, his health, and private mind, to the welfare of a country which can only be thus secured?"

"If honour, and real love of that country will not do it," replied De Vere, "I know not what will. Certainly the emoluments you ministers are supposed to covet, never will."

"How truly have your answered;" said Wentworth. "And yet it is for these emoluments, these 'rascal counters,' that we are supposed to covet the dangers, the strifes, and turmoils of our struggling lives. For these, and these only, it is thought that we watch, while others sleep; that we are anxious, while others laugh; that we bend under responsibility, while others trip lightly and cheerily on their way."

Here the conversation paused, for Wentworth seemed still occupied with his reflections, nor would De Vere interrupt him, for he was really struck with this

* Particularly by the Otober Club.

unexpected ebullition in a man so ardent. Wentworth therefore went on:—

"This malignant, this scandalous injustice," said he, "startles me still more, now that I have achieved, from motives (as to you I can say it) the most opposite of all this, what the black and disappointed spirits of the land will be let loose upon me to assail with calumny. May I not then feel alarmed, and exclaim with him who knew every part of our nature so well—

> "O! hard condition! twin-born with greatness,
> "Subjected to the breath of every fool,
> "Whose sense no more can feel but his own wringing!
> "What infinite heart's-ease must kings neglect
> "That private men enjoy!"

"Come," said De Vere, "this is not the way I had expected that the minister of a nation's wishes would have received his appointment; and did I not feel that it is the mere cloud of a moment, I should tremble for what is so like despondency."

"No!" returned Wentworth, "I will not despond, with the support of such men as yourself, and the reward which no one can take from me—a sense of that honour and love of country which you mentioned just now. This is, in fact, the only real encouragement of true ambition. For while our power is assailed, our motives misrepresented, our characters blackened, and our very persons sometimes hated, and all, while toiling for the public good, what treasure in the shape of gold, what real reward can make up for it, save only honour."

De Vere was really moved with this sincere burst of feeling in the new minister, who, however, felt relieved by it, and began to brighten.

"Come," said he, "it is past; the cloud is gone, and we will look only to the better side of things. One of my best comforts will be to have you near me, in my arduous undertaking. You promised to fight by my side as soon as you were free to do it. You are so now, and I expect you to perform your promise."

"How can I help you?" asked De Vere.

"By placing yourself in office."

"I would rather be your country gentleman, and give you support out of it."

"I expected as much," said Wentworth.

"But I want the credit of your name, where most it will give me credit. I want it not to be said, as it too often is of a minister's friends, that they support him like the Swiss, merely for pay."

"I approve your principle," said De Vere, "but fear I am selfish enough to resist it. For a high and commanding office, I have not experience enough to be fit; for a subordinate one, to register mandates at a board, or be the mere depository of a great man's confidence, who is, as he ought to be, above consulting you, and only confides in you as a safe machine; this, though absolutely necessary in itself, would not, I own, be agreeable to me."

"I own too," said Wentworth, smiling, "that I have made a mistake. I forgot I was talking to the proudest man in England; and whose pride withal is not lessened by having just stepped into ten thousand a year."

De Vere shook his head, and became in his turn exceedingly thoughtful; nay, so absent, that Wentworth began to wonder what sudden uneasiness had come over him. In fact, De Vere was thinking of the little intention, if not the little right he had to retain this ten thousand a year, could he dispose of it as his heart wished.

"Have I not enough interest with you," at last said Wentworth, "to win you to be always near me, in our relation of friends, rather than of chief and second."

"Yes," replied De Vere, "but chief and second must then be abolished between us, which it would not be were I to be clothed with any character. In short, *malim ut de me quærant homines, quam ob rem Catoni non sit posita statua, quam quare sit posita.** I will, therefore, be as near you as you please, as your independent supporter; but, count upon it, whatever service you think I can do you, it will be better done

* I would rather that men inquired why a statue was not erected to Cato, than why it was.

by showing my deference to you as a friend, than as a master."

"I think you mistake this matter," said Wentworth. "It is only in the recesses of office, the daily and hourly ingress to which is not only natural, but necessary to one in an official capacity, that you can be to me what I want. As the great independent you choose to be, you will and must be comparatively aloof. You may give me a little grace now and then when I want it in the House, but the *substantial* comfort I look to out of it, will be to seek. We shall have no departmental business, bringing us always together; our intimacy, though not cooled, may yet be interrupted; we shall first wonder that we so seldom meet, and at last grow reconciled to not meeting at all."

"Is this then," asked De Vere, alarmed, "the character of friendship among public men?"

"It is, at least, too often the fact," replied Wentworth.

"I will think of it," said De Vere, and he took a cordial leave.

He hastened to Flowerdale, whom he had scarcely seen since he returned from France, and whom he found in his office-room, arranging and destroying papers, examining some with care, classing others, delivering many to clerks, and tearing many. There was an air about him of careful attention to the business he was upon.

Always, however, glad to see De Vere, he received him with apparent pleasure; though we are not sure that his manner was not marked with somewhat more formality, certainly more deference and consideration than usual. Whether this was owing to the secret respect, which a change from very moderate to very rich circumstances almost always occasions, or whether it was the accession of De Vere's particular friends to power, we have not divined. There was, however, no meanness in the baronet's civility, and he appeared the same mild, sensible, and collected person as ever.

He would have talked of the decree, but found it unpalatable, for De Vere avoided the conversation. "We

will wait," said he, "to see what time will ultimately determine."

Sir William thought he meant that Lord Clevland intended to appeal, and asked as much, but De Vere undeceived him.

"He is at least in a miserable mortified state," said Sir William, having quarrelled with his Sovereign, out of sheer insolence, broke up the whole government out of revenge, and all growing out of an avaricious injustice, for which he is universally blamed, if not despised."

"I come not to talk of him," said De Vere. "I would much rather talk of yourself, and ask, if I may, whether what I have heard be true, that you mean to withdraw from the new ministry, the benefit of your services."

"Of course," said Sir William, with an air of cautious curiosity, "I must not ask who was your informant?"

"I can scarcely say I have been informed, when I have only heard a report."

"And the reporter?"

"Mr. Wentworth himself."

Sir William's countenance, placid as it was, became instantly a little clouded; and something like colour came into his cheeck. But he checked it and resumed his usual undisturbed air.

"Does this report then trouble you?" asked De Vere. "If so, I hope it is not true."

"To say it *troubles* me, is perhaps too much," replied the baronet. "Me, who have been so long in office, and seen so many strange revolutions, that though none ought to surprise me, it is very fit I should retire, and make way for others, as may be wished. Indeed, I have long felt that I have had enough of official life. I have seen and outlived most of the great men, and it is even time I should retire."

"Has any *wish* then been signified to you to this effect?" asked De Vere.

"Not precisely," answered Sir William; "but there

are *indications* fully equal to a direct *signification*. Mr. Wentworth not being yet installed, can hardly have demanded my office; but there is a whispering gallery at the treasury, as well as at St. Paul's; and the universal sweep to be made, is perfectly well known. I can only hope that the new system intended to be adopted may prosper."

"And may I ask, as you have formerly permitted me, your opinion upon this new system?"

"It is not for me," replied Sir Willliam, "who have no share in it, to pretend even to know enough of it to form an opinion."

The baronet here became suddenly occupied with some papers which he had before him, and seemed evidently to wish to retire from the subject.

"We are formal together," said De Vere. "This is not the way we used to meet."

"You are a different man," replied his friend, "and stand no longer in need of the only thing I had to give, lessons of experience. Nay," added he, with a bow, in which there was a mixture of real deference, with assumed form, "I know not that I may not be talking to one of my masters."

De Vere could not help smiling at his caution, but assured him it was not so. "I wish not, however," said he, "to force confidence, though I have such high hopes from the new order of things, that I should like still to have the opinion of a person who so well understood the old one."

"I most sincerely wish it may answer," replied Sir William; "and that the new maxim, of measures not men, may succeed. I, however, allow," added he, with some constraint of countenance, "that to give it the best chance for success, Mr. Wentworth is but right in contemplating the universal change which it seems he means to make of all the old office men."

"Yourself among them?" asked De Vere.

Sir William's features, schooled as they were to a habitual and prudent tranquillity, could not help discovering curiosity at this speech. In fact, the interest was as earnest as habitual self-possession could permit, and

he fairly asked De Vere his meaning. The latter, who had no concealments of his own, when opening a frank communication with another, as fairly told him that he had, only a few minutes before, heard Mr. Wentworth say that he *regretted* Sir William's intention of retiring.

"A man may do that," returned Sir William, rather gravely, "while he is accepting with pleasure the resignation he regrets."

"That did not appear to me," said De Vere.

"May I ask what did appear?"

"A real wish that you would continue where you are; and, in fact, an express desire, which I was even commissioned to communicate, that Mr. Wentworth might continue to receive your assistance, in your present department."

"That, at least, contradicts what I had heard," observed Sir William, evidently changing, "for I was told he had said that my place would be particularly wanted, and that I was too much wedded to the old school, to make it safe to leave me."

"And but for this, then, you would not have thought of retiring?" said De Vere.

"The case would have been altered," answered his friend.

"And may I ask your informant?"

"As he was not correct, it is of little consequence," said Sir William.

Here a pause ensued. There was evidently, however, less constraint in the baronet's manner. His features became more open, and his eye more placid; which De Vere observing, he frankly said,—

"As you are, then, one of his government, may I not now ask your opinion of Mr. Wentworth's plan of administration?"

"I have not the real facts sufficiently before me," replied the Nestor, after deliberation, "to enable me to give an answer. I have been informed, indeed, that all which was formerly called management is to be abandoned; that influenced majorities are not to be attempted; contracts, loans, and lottery-tickets never to be thought of; so that, the disgraceful maxim of the old duke, that

it was cheaper to buy the elected than the electors, is to be reprobated; while influence in the elections themselves is also to be scouted. Thus the whole government is to rest for its basis upon the wisdom and publicity of its measures, and the purity of its conduct alone."

"And can you form no opinion upon all this?"

"I, at least, admire it," said Sir William, "and hope the best, as I shall certainly continue to do. But, as an old observer, I cannot but remember former maxims of very able, though, perhaps, you may call them very diplomatic men, who held that the public have passions to be moved, but no reason to be appealed to; and that while *truth* may move half a score of men in a nation, or an age, *mystery* will lead millions by the nose."

"Your authority is Bolingbroke," said De Vere, "always, on all subjects, too passionate, and blinded by his personal feelings, not to be questionable."

"He was, however," replied Sir William, "nursed among the characters he thus describes, and his opinions (without meaning to say they are mine) have their supporters among the experienced of the present day."

"And what may these experienced people think?" said De Vere.

"They have the presumption," said Sir William, "to say, that Mr. Wentworth goes a century at least before the people he is to govern; and they prophecy that his government will not, because it cannot stand. Nay, they boldly assert, that the House of Commons and the people themselves will be the first to call for a return to the old order."

"And do you approve these notions?"

"That I do not say. There are, to be sure, extremes in every thing; but I should be sorry to be among those who say that it is possible for a minister to be too honest."

"'Tis a sentiment as unfounded as wicked," cried De Vere, "and I am sorry the system has not more of your favour. It is certain that both things and men are changed, since the days of your oracle, Bolingbroke."

"I beg not to be misunderstood," replied Sir Wil-

liam. "The new system never was out of favour with me. Though hazardous, I think it worthy the patriotic mind that conceived it; and, with the firmness and ability of Mr. Wentworth, I really hope it may be brought to perfection."

"Hope and *think*, are different things," said De Vere. "What is your thought?"

"I think, then," answered the baronet, feeling pushed, "that in such able hands, it may succeed. Under older politicians, I am sure it would not."

"And may I tell this to Mr. Wentworth?"

"Certainly."

The conversation ended, the friends parted, and De Vere telling him he should hear from him again, Sir William gave orders to return all the papers he was examining, to their old pigeon-holes, from which some of them had not stirred for thirty years. He then coolly walked into the park; and nobody, from his countenance, could gather whether he was in or out.

A second visit from De Vere found the Nestor greatly changed. He said that all eyes were now turned on Mr. Wentworth with hope and even fondness; and that Lord Oldcastle, and the partisans of the old order were daily losing ground; that the combination of great families would give way, and the new æra be universally hailed.

De Vere observed that he had become infinitely more sanguine, and that all his old frankness with him had returned. Sir William, however, wondered to see De Vere yet unplaced.

"And is not the place of Mr. Wentworth's friend, as honourable as office?" asked De Vere.

"As honourable, but yet not so useful; and if you wish to take part in public affairs, more than as a mere member of parliament—"

"*Mere* member of parliament," cried De Vere; "what character so noble, so useful to England, as an honest English country gentleman?"

"An honest English secretary of state," said Flowerdale. "But without going so high, an apparently very little person, who is able and sincere, and from office, is admitted behind the scenes, is often of more

real use and consequence to England than the country gentlemen of half a dozen counties. I will not describe these, as they were once called, *placidum pecus;* on the contrary, many are enlightened and more will be so, as the country advances, and education extends. But a man whose greatest or only glory is to hunt his fox, and rail against *Germany*, will set up his acres in vain, with a view to raise the estimation of his character, or even of his consequence, in comparison with those who lead, or ably follow in the administration of the nation's interests."

"You talk, said De Vere, "as if you had lately been studying the English squirehood, or reading that delightful book which paints the flower of it, Squire Western."

"That race," said Flowerdale, "is, thank heaven, fast dying away, and in a few years will be no more. But though our posterity may be more polished Nimrods, and some of them, too, will have weight in the greatest national affairs; yet, speaking generally, the influence of the state will always belong to those who do the business of the state. If I might advise, therefore, though you are Mr. Wentworth's friend, you will also be his coadjutor."

"And where would you place me?" asked De Vere, to try him.

"Not *any* where," anwered Flowerdale, smiling; "for some situations you are too proud; for others too modest; but, above all, I would not place you where what you saw might bring your good opinion of men into hazard. The town, indeed, is, as you know, still talking of what was lately said to the French king, by a traveller who pretends to be a philosopher."

"And what was that?"

"*Pour estimer les hommes, il faut être ni confesseur, ni ministre, ni lieutenant de police.*"

De Vere laughed and asked if the king made no reply?

"A pointed one," said Flowerdale, for he added, "*Ni Roi.*"

"This man apprehends things passing shrewdly," said De Vere to himself, when he left him. "It is cer-

tain, too, we all belong to our country, and ought to serve it; but am I yet at my own disposal?"

The thought was embarrassing, and he wandered in agitation far away from official haunts and official subjects; and, these interviews over, he gave himself up more than ever to dreams which had any thing for their object but political ambition, and which, could they be realized, romance itself might have envied him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SOMETHING VERY JEALOUS.

Tell her, my love, more noble than the world,
Prizes not quantity of dirty lands.

SHAKSPEARE.

Too long have we been detained from that story of tenderness which we now resume, although it would not be without pleasure that we dwelt some little longer upon that high and honour-stirring field of ambition which now opened to Wentworth and his band of friends. This band was daily increasing, for its leader had bought "golden opinions from all sorts of people." As to De Vere, with whom he had one or two other fruitless interviews, he at last fairly told him to get him gone to Castle Mowbray, for he should have no good of him till he had been there. We may suppose how readily De Vere obeyed.

We may suppose, too, that long previous to his arrival, the wonders which had been passing in town were known to the lovely lady of that castle, and her now only companion, Lady Eleanor; for Lady Clanellan had returned to her lord, after some few days visit. But the packets of the marquess kept the party informed of every thing.

The letters of De Vere to his mother were more close. His romantic design in favour of his cousin was

not abandoned, though much weakened, as we have seen, by the argument of Lord Chancellan, that his offer, if made, would not be accepted. Of all those feelings of his heart which spoke gentleman to all who knew him, one of the most jealous was that which made him shrink from any thing that could be called *display*. If this was true in regard to meaner things, what was it on a point on which he was the most sensitive—his love for Constance? That love was made up of such perfect, such entire esteem, united with such delicate, as well as admiring affection, that though he could have shed his blood for her if necessary, he would have died rather than have professed it.

Nevertheless, his impulse towards restitution would not quit his mind, where his cousin reigned in all her sweetness, and all her glory. No business, however urgent, no advantages, however obvious, could detach him from an interest which every day grew more absorbing. The political changes that had happened had delayed, but not altered him; and, at length, unable to bear his feelings any longer, he stole secretly away, and did not stop till he arrived at the Fox.

This little inn, at the foot of Castle Mowbray hill, we presume is not forgotten by the reader. Here, however, De Vere was seized by a thousand misgivings as to his reception, which prevented him from going farther. Indeed there seemed a spell set upon this little inn; for never had he been there without experiencing some emotion, some interest of consequence to his heart. He wrote therefore to his mother, previously to visiting the castle.

"Why, I am here," said he, "I scarcely know myself, except that I was too restless in London to remain *there*. Yet now I *am* here, I feel like a criminal, and dare not advance. I know not my situation with my poor and plundered Constance, and feel that the plunderer can do nothing but what I am doing, *lurk* about these once loved precincts, till I know how I shall be received. I am bewildered with contending designs, which, ever since the decree, have robbed me of my peace. One, indeed, I had conceived, which gave a joy to my mind, but which was quickly dashed from it

by Lord Clanellan; and yet upon that design I am more than ever fixed, if it be only feasible. For if Constance is not still to enjoy these estates, never shall I enjoy them myself. The wish of my heart therefore, is perfectly known to it; but how to bring it about, is what overpowers me. Yet if I offer to restore them, I am told I shall be refused; refused perhaps, as if I had also offered an insult to a delicacy which I would die sooner than wound.

"Thus am I tossed on a sea of doubt, from which I can only be relieved by one of two things, either that Constance will consent to repossess these estates, as an absolute sacrifice to justice; or, without any offer of restitution, that she will accept them from me in a very different capacity. Yet of this last, what is the hope? where the encouragement? You, whom I have never consulted without benefit, advise me, watch for me, act for me, say whether I may approach her, and what I may expect."

The tender confidence between Constance and her aunt, made it impossible for Lady Eleanor either to conceal that this letter had been received, or that it was fraught with even more than usual interest. But it was equally impossible at once to reveal its contents, and Constance remained long in an ignorance of them, which to her was mysterious. At another time she would have fairly asked to know them, but Constance was grown timid.

Lady Eleanor felt that she had a very critical part to act. If she laid De Vere's letter before her niece, which had almost been her first impulse, she ran the risk of, perhaps, a dangerous acceleration of his greater purpose. For whatever might have been her hope, she was by no means so sure of the inclinations of his cousin, as to justify what might end in a disappointment almost as bitter to herself as to him. But at any rate, by this disclosure she would immediately expose him to what he so much wished to avoid, the imputation that he attempted to derive merit with her, by a show of generosity. Yet, to leave him utterly without assistance, after such a letter, was unmotherly, unkind; and she resolved to take the chances of a middle course, which

like most middle courses, ended in no satisfaction. She resolved to *sound* her niece; a task for which she was utterly unfit. In truth, her mind was too high for any thing that might be called *management;* and far easier would it have been, and far more consonant to her own modes of action, to have laid the whole letter at once before Lady Constance; for as it turned out, she reaped nothing but discomfort from the best intentions in the world.

The fact of De Vere's arrival in the neighbourhood, could not be withheld, and it was sufficiently important to call forth an inquiry after all that the curiosity or interest of Constance had wished to know.

"But what can he possibly mean by stopping at that poor inn, when so close to the castle?"

Constance asked this with unfeigned wonder, and in good sooth, it puzzled her aunt (whose mind, even for the best purposes, disdained dissimulation) to know how to answer. But the moment she thought was come, when by opening the subject at a distance, she might be able to ascertain more of the feelings of her niece, than she had hitherto even attempted.

"Strange to say, he fears you, Constance," said Lady Eleanor, "fears you, after the issue of this vexatious suit."

"Fears me!" exclaimed Constance, "this would make it a vexatious suit indeed. But we must talk no more of it. I have done thinking of it myself, nor do I wish ever to hear of it again, except as a matter of joy that it has given fortune where it will be so much better used."

"I believe you, dearest Constance," said Lady Eleanor. "But you must allow it once, and only once more to be mentioned, with a view to future determinations. You must forgive his mother, at least, a wish to spare this excellent Mortimer, what I know embarrasses his heart, the task of asking your consent to some arrangement in regard to these estates, without which I know he never will be happy."

The fears and jealousy of Constance were immediately alarmed. She perceived at once, that what her cousin had formerly glanced at, was about to be proposed

in form; and she became grave, and even almost distant in her manner, as if waiting some offer which her judgment could not approve, or her pride could not accept.

"Nay," said Lady Eleanor, perceiving that her very first experiment had gone too far, "I must not mar, as I see I am doing, a good and honourable cause. Such alone can be De Vere's. I will, therefore, myself abstain from going further. But if you will permit my son to wait upon you, he will best explain himself."

"My son!" thought Constance, "permit him to wait upon me. Are we then upon such formal terms, and does his accession to fortune only throw him at a distance? My dear aunt," continued she, "I cannot understand this language;" and perhaps her gentle heart, gentle as it was, with the fear that we have mentioned, acting upon it, felt something of the heiress of Mowbray in it, when she expressed her wonder at such terms.

"Forgive us this formality, said Lady Eleanor, "and forget a mode of expression which ought never to prevail between us. But you must allow something to a new and embarrassing situation; nor can I blame Mortimer (for it is his expression) for feeling, and showing that he feels, that if what has passed *can* make a difference in your situations together, it is only that more respect is due to you than ever."

The thought did not displease, and Constance fully restored, entreated her to say what it was that Mortimer had to explain.

Lady Eleanor found she had now nothing left for it but to unfold the truth. "He wishes to show you," said she, "the total want of right that he has to the decree that has been pronounced; a decree which he thinks from the law itself, ought to have been in your favour, and thinking thus, need I add, that as a De Vere, he cannot, nay, ought not to submit to enjoy what is not his own."

"And does he think then," said Constance, with something almost amounting to pride, "that a Mowbray is so inferior to a De Vere, that I can submit to enjoy what I think not my own? If the motive of his journey is to bestow these estates upon me, I own I had expected differently from my cousin."

"*Bestow*, my dearest love," said Lady Eleanor, uneasy, "is not a word which Mortimer, which *I*, could presume to use to Lady Constance Mowbray; nor must you suppose that such a notion ever came near us."

"Why, then," said Constance, gravely, and deeply affected, "why does he suppose I can accept what my grandfather, it seems, did not choose I should enjoy. I did not know he thought of me so meanly." In saying this, she displayed that look of reflecting determination, which, when occasion called for it, indicated that part of her character, beyond all mistaking; and Lady Eleanor was now seriously distressed.

"I see," said she, "I have undertaken a task to which I am not equal, and I had better have left it to better hands. But believe, my dearest niece, that I have meant nothing, done nothing, but what proceeded from a maternal anxiety, and an ardent wish for the happiness of you both. But, if I have mismanaged this, so as to have occasioned you one uneasy thought, I am already self-punished, and I trust I have only to ask your forgiveness, to receive it. Promise me this, dear Constance, and what is still more, promise to admit, and to hear my son."

So saying, with an air of consciousness, but also of much affection, she extended her hand to her niece, while her countenance showed that it was not without a struggle, that she prevented a greater emotion from being discovered.

The earnestness, if not the pathos, of this appeal, disarmed Constance in a moment, and completely penetrated a heart made for all the softer virtues, though also made capable of some little jealousy, when her sense of independence was concerned. The little excitements of her pride were therefore forgotten, and she would have kissed the hand which Lady Eleanor offered to her, had not the latter prevented her by folding her in her arms, and blessing her with a fervour which she had never shown before. She then left her, wondering what all this could mean, and fearful that it might only be a prelude to a greater trial.

Alone, and absorbed with what had passed, the still agitated girl endeavoured to collect, if she could, all

that had been intended by Lady Eleanor. The notion of a designed offer of restitution still possessed, and still offended her; and though she had cordially forgiven the little ebullition of her aunt respecting the pride of a De Vere, it is but truth to say that it had given her own pride (so mistaken was she for the moment) a stimulus in regard to the conduct meant to be pursued. "Really," said she, to herself, "if this is a visit of pride, if Mr. De Vere supposes that I am the humble creature to receive back from his munificence, what the law has so clearly shown could never be mine; if he thinks that I can be deceived into a belief that he only is just, while judges are unjust; if——" She could have proceeded with many more *ifs*, had this frame of mind continued, but it lasted not a moment longer than we have taken to record it. For scarcely had she in her little jealousy, conceived such a notion of her cousin, than his whole character flashed across her—his right judgment; his propriety; his respect for the independent character of others; and, above all, his never failing delicacy towards herself. This banished the unjust notion for ever, and she immediately began to tax herself with severity, for the petulance of her feelings, and this cruel censure of one who deserved it so little. "Ah! no!" she said, "Mortimer never could mean this, and owes the design he has conceived solely to the convictions of his understanding, and the justice of his heart. And even," continued the relenting Constance (relenting almost to tears, from the pride she had evinced,) "even if he *had* been governed by generosity; if for *me*, and to replace *me* in the situation I have lost, he is ready to return to comparative poverty *himself*, am I the person to complain? Am I the being to resent it as an insult? Too generous Mortimer; and ah, too jealous, froward, and petulant Constance!"

In this strain she proceeded, till she fell into the opposite extreme. Her self-reproaches got the better of her, and her o'er fraught heart was so hurt with what it thought its own unworthiness, that it could no longer restrain its feeling, and she actually sobbed aloud.

If any one feel disposed to criticise these traits of

character, let him recollect that we have no where professed to paint perfection; because there is no such thing. It has pleased superior wisdom to make our constitution here of such a nature, that he only is most perfect, who is least imperfect; and if Constance has had faults, it is because no one can be without them. At the same time, we know not that faults may not excite greater interest than absolute perfection.

It is at least probable that we are often more pleased with a graceful recovery from error, than with that uniform surface where no error is. It is certain that the swollen heart, and charming contrition of Constance in this little trial, endeared her to Lady Eleanor, and to Mortimer, when he afterwards learned it, more than even all the faultlessness of her former life.

CHAPTER XXX.

SOMETHING VERY TENDER.

I,
Beyond all limit of what else i'the world,
Do love—prize—honour you.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE temper in which we left the dear Constance, at the end of the last chapter, was at least auspicious for De Vere, who was now seeking her, after having been for some half hour or so, closeted with his mother, during which he learned all that her zeal for him had done, and all that she had failed to do. It was clear that the offer of restitution, backed by whatever arguments, must be given up, and that the greater purpose of his heart, must alone be pursued.

Yet to open this so suddenly was what he could not easily resolve upon. He had given her so little reason to expect it; he had lately indeed so studiously avoided the intimacy once so sweet to him; he had so little, even in his most admiring moments, appeared to court her notice with these intentions, that if he now decla-

red them, he feared being thought sudden and capricious where he ought to be most deliberate and uniform. On the other hand, he knew nothing certain of her own feelings towards him, and had at one time even thought her distant and insensible. All this filled him with doubt and apprehension, particularly while his own contradictory conduct (as he thought it) remained unexplained. He therefore came to the resolution of postponing the full developement of his hopes, and decided only to give a history of his heart under its seeming inconsistencies, so that all misunderstanding might be cleared up before he proceeded with his grand design.

With these views he sought his cousin, and found her in a small flower-garden, at the bottom of the Castle Hill, of which she was very fond, and to which she often retired to regain composure, when, as of late had not unfrequently happened, some surprise or other emotion of mind had made retreat necessary.

Though she knew he was expected, and he had so lately been the only subject of a conversation which still absorbed her, she started as she saw him advancing up the walk to the bench where she was sitting. She rose, however, on his approach, and an unfeigned, though perhaps restrained pleasure on seeing him again, was the first sensation she experienced. She therefore very frankly gave him the hand he sought.

"It is long since we met, dear Constance," said he, "and how I am to meet you again, I hardly know. It is certain that I have dreaded this interview as if I were a criminal. But why do I say *as if*, when I feel that I am so?"

"Indeed!" said Constance, smiling very sweetly (for it was here very naturally,) "and am I thought so little and so common place, that because I have been defeated in an endeavour to keep what does not belong to me, I am to hate the right owner, as if *he* not *I* had been the wrong-doer?"

"This is delightful, dear cousin," cried Mortimer, in rapture at such a reception, "but you were always an angel, and to me sometimes a guardian angel. Can you wonder then, that I have longed for this inter-

view, nay, found it necessary to my peace? That I wish for your permission to lay before you, what, while pent up within myself, I feel must ever keep me from being happy."

This was too particular to make Constance feel at her ease, especially after the preparatory conversation which had just passed with Lady Eleanor. She felt as if something, she knew not what, was impending of consequence to her happiness, certainly to her interest. Yet if it regarded the purpose which Lady Eleanor had opened, respecting restitution, she felt all her independence (we will not again call it her pride) reviving. She therefore waited for him to proceed, with an air of grave composure, which did not at all accord with his wishes.

A doubting lover is always a sensitive plant. This gravity filled him with fear, and he himself became grave.

"Yes!" said he, "the anxieties of the last two years have been wound up with one of so much consequence to the fortune of my cousin, and I feel myself so implicated in the mischief that has been done, that I cannot now stand before her, as the attached, may I say the protecting friend, which I flatter myself I have sometimes been thought."

"Indeed, cousin Mortimer," returned Constance, "I cannot now understand you; nor do I take it as any compliment that you should suppose me so selfish or unjust as you must, when you mark our meeting with such suspicions."

"Whoever could suspect you," replied he, "of any character short of angelic, knows not my cousin: and it is to that character I would now address myself, for I have much to say."

Constance felt again alarmed, for she feared that what Lady Eleanor had intimated was now about to be opened in form; and she was so determined not to submit even to listen to proposals which she felt to be humiliating, that she would have instantly returned to the house; and she actually rose from her seat to do so, rather than suffer him to proceed.

"I frighten you," said he, perceiving her intention,

"and well perhaps I may, for who has such cause as you to be afraid of a man who, after passing through a long train of contradictions and caprices, has ended in being the invader of your rights, and the ravisher of your estates?"

"This is really cruel," observed Constance, "and I know not my cousin who affronts me by supposing I am so wedded to these odious estates. But when he talks of contradictions and caprices, how am I to think of what I can so little understand?"

"It will not be easy," replied De Vere, with some hesitation, "to explain all I have to unfold. But in respect to this suit, which you have justly called so odious——"

"Nay said Constance, rising again, and now moving from her seat, "generous as I admit your purpose to be, cousin De Vere, I take it not well of you that you still return to a subject on which my sentiments are known, although my character, it seems, is so mistaken."

So saying, she moved hastily away, while De Vere, dreading to lose such an opportunity for his purpose, entreated her stay.

"Stay, I implore you," cried he, "nor misunderstand me as I see you do. My cousin, I hope, will not refuse me a minute, while I attempt to explain what I meant by contradictions and caprices, of which I feel to painfully I may have been thought guilty."

Constance unaffectedly surprised, stopped for a moment, unable to comprehend what appeared to be so mysterious. But thinking that he still alluded to his conduct during the suit, which had altered as we have seen according to the circumstances that fell out; and determined that the subject should never be entertained between them, she resumed her hurried pace, while he followed in a state of disappointment amounting to mortification. Perhaps also the great change that had taken place in their relative situations (the consequence of this very suit) had some little influence, though a secret one, on the conduct of Constance. Of all beings in the world, she was the farthest from caprice; but it was not impossible that, even without knowing it, she might

think the familiar and confiding footing she had formerly been allowed by her parent to indulge with so near a relation (the *élève* of his uncle, composing part of his family, and a mere candidate for preferment,) might not be so strictly proper now that she was left without protection, and he had become the man of consequence he was.

From whatever cause, the interview seemed to be at an end; and De Vere was left to surmises not very consolatory to his heart. In regard to his chief hope, he had no certainty of his cousins feelings towards him. He had himself exhibited, at different times, at least a difference in his demeanour towards her, which, unexplained, might hurt him; and though her lofty spirit could not brook even the mention of the suit, his heart yearned to tell how he felt affected by it himself. All these notions rushed into his mind as he slowly followed her, till at last, seeing the distance between them increase, he cried out, in a tone of anxious impressiveness, "Does Lady Constance then refuse the audience I have requested?"

Thus solicited, she could not but stop; and, to her still greater surprise, she beheld him big, as she thought, with some great purpose of mind, far exceeding any thing that could grow out of the disposal of an estate. She became anxious and suspicious in her turn; the *permission to wait upon her*, asked for him by Lady Eleanor, came into her mind; and the involuntary burst of admiration which escaped from him in their former conversation, respecting the seat in Parliament, could not but intrude, as indeed it frequently had intruded, on her memory, since that conversation. She, therefore, knew not what to think or expect. On the other hand, nothing could be less certain than any opinion she could form of his purpose; and when she granted the audience he requested, as she could not but do, the expectations of no young person in such a situation, were ever less sanguine or determinate as to the end, than those of the amiable and anxious Constance. Anxious and excited, she certainly was; for disguise it as she might to her pride, considering how little he had

seemed to seek her, she felt that she thought of her cousin as she did of no other man.

This mental contest, however, had the effect of making her helpless, for she suffered Mortimer gently to lead her back to the seat they had quitted. And here, with manly tenderness, mingled with that cordial respect which he bore to her virtues, he poured out his heart to her in a history of himself, which however exciting to her feelings, was for a long time so indecisive as to his real and final determination, that it bewildered, if it did not deaden whatever expectation she might have fostered.

There was, indeed, much early love; but there were many resolutions against it; and her emotions, though always excited, wore very different characters in the progress of the story.

He told her the impressions with which the very first sight of her at Litchfield had inspired him; of the uniform increase of those impressions, till they amounted to an attachment, spite of hopeless poverty and ruined prospects, which he could never, he said, weaken, much less eradicate.

"He has then made the attempt," thought Constance, but dared not speak; when her attention became still more fixed, by his confessing that he had watched over her career in London with trembling anxiety.

"I found not, however," said he, "a fault; while your angelic conduct under Lord Mowbray's reverses, and your dignified bearing towards Lord Cleveland, raised my esteem to a point little short of adoration."

Constance listened to this declaration with mute, but intense emotion. Not a word escaped, but not a word was answered; and when he here paused, though her breathing was quick, and her cheek more and more flushed, her eyes had not yet assumed courage enough to turn towards his.

De Vere went on to expatiate on his fruitless endeavours to open to himself a way to fortune, the better to enable him to approach her; confessing that every failure had been made ten times more bitter by the thought that he had only increased the distance," between

them. "A distance," said he, "which I never ceased to bewail, but religiously resolved to keep, especially when I saw you admired and courted by the nobles and princes of the land. But my joy was at its height when I found that they courted you in vain. And yet," continued he, in a mournful tone, "what was this in the end, but an additional cause for despair? For was it for me, though so near you in blood, yet so far removed from you in fortune, to succeed, where so many illustrious had failed?"

Constance shook her head, and gave a faint smile; but her cheek remained fixed upon her hand, and her eyes were still cast down. It was only her ears which were open; but though they heard what was not displeasing, they conveyed no certainties to her heart.

"Shall I proceed with this history?" said De Vere, doubtful what to augur from her determined silence, "or can I flatter myself that Lady Constance deems it worthy her attention?"

"Call me not Lady Constance," at last she said, though faintly, "I never liked it, and never shall like it again?"

Strange that these few little words, the sense of which, too, might be misapplied, immediately gave courage, and hope, and glorious joy to him who heard them, even though they were uttered in a voice scarcely audible, and the countenance of the speaker seemed more retiring and more confused than ever.

De Vere proceeded with the story of his mind:—

"Yes!" said he, "the rejection of these high alliances only convinced me more than ever that I could not myself succeed, even had our situations been more equal; and I redoubled my efforts to overcome an affection so improperly aspiring—so destructive to my happiness."

He again paused, but the grave attention of his cousin seemed here more than ever fixed.

"I heard even," proceeded he, and here his voice faltered, "that you had spoken *contemptuously* of the presumption of my attachment—"

"Contemptuously!" exclaimed Constance, with grief and astonishment mixed; and her agitation broke in upon her collectedness. She, however, could go no farther.

"But I did not believe it," continued De Vere, "because, though I knew it would be presumptuous to declare it, *contempt* never could be the feeling of so gentle, and at the same time so honourable a bosom, towards love unprofessed, and hopes cherished (if cherished) only in secret. Had, therefore, even a lower man than myself, in point of situation, loved you thus, I knew the modesty I had admired too well to believe it capable of despising feelings so involuntary, so humble, and so repressed."

"You were always noble-minded," said Constance, gratefully affected; but she dared not herself to tell him what she felt.

"At the same time," continued he, with a more erect air, "I had something within which told me, that were our conditions more equal, whatever might be the fate of the feelings I had fostered, contempt was not the sentiment they would have inspired in my cousin."

"I cannot bear this," murmured Constance, with softness, "the very word shocks me."

"I thought as much from your excellence," said De Vere. "On one side I was of the same blood as yourself; on the other I was of an unsullied name, and whatever my value for the character I had loved; whatever my delight in the thousand sweet qualities that had won me, forgive me if I thought I had a mind which yielded to none in its powers of appreciating them."

All this was delighting to the ear of Constance, and she could have listened long; yet still she knew not what notion to form of the conclusion to which, after all, he might be coming.

"And yet," said he, "there was something in our last interview, before I went abroad—"

"Oh! name it not," said Constance, finding voice. "I remember it but too well, and my poor father—" Here her recollections checked her.

"I know it all," said De Vere, willing to spare her, "and I know how much my uncle was imposed upon by an artful man, and his still worse tool. But even without this I acquitted my noble-minded cousin."

"You were ever good and just," said Constance, pleasingly revived by this assurance.

"Yet, for the reasons I have given," said De Vere, "I wished to overcome myself, and intended to remain abroad in search of indifference, if I could find it: and perhaps——"

He paused, and Constance breathed quicker. "But I will not dwell upon these designs, which yielded to the change of circumstances on the continent, to the persuasions of my mother, and the news of what was passing at home; while, afterwards, the domestic calamity which so soon overtook my amiable cousin, dispelled every wish or design but to contribute to her comfort."

"Believe me I felt it as I ought," said Constance; "I felt how friendless and heart-broken I should have been but for you and a very few others."

She then returned to her listening attitude; but still involved in perplexing uncertainties.

"At length," resumed Mortimer, "this suit, and all its tumults and anxieties—Oh! if you knew the trials I underwent, the alarms for you which I felt, the opinions I entertained, and still entertain as to your rights, and the fears of Lord Cleveland, which alone brought me forward—indeed, dear Constance, though I have robbed you, you would forgive me."

"Robbed! forgive!" cried Constance; and she once more began to fear the odious subject of restitution.

"Yes," proceeded De Vere, "and my only comfort was what I am now afraid to mention, and what I am grieved to find Lady Eleanor—"

"If you mean," said Constance, interrupting him, "your generous purpose (for generous I must ever call it, spite of my late ungracious feelings upon it) of restoring these estates, I can only observe, though the offer is wholly inadmissible, I am penetrated to the

heart by the intention. For I have not yet done feeling ashamed of the ungrateful petulance I showed to Lady Eleanor, which must for ever lower the character you are pleased to say you have admired.

"Pleased to say!" hastily cried De Vere; "Is my sincerity then questioned? Is my good faith in this doubted? Alas! if my admiration of *you* is thought unreal, or my long-lasting love—greater at this instant than ever—if *this* be deemed an untruth, where—where is truth to be found?"

His whole secret was now torn from him against his intention, it should seem, and certainly before its time. For the expressions of Constance had wounded his pride. Yet were they no more than a little awkwardness of language, occasioned by her hurry to suppress a subject which she was determined not to admit. But De Vere, could he have wished for the most unequivocal proofs that his affection was met, had them now all before him; for his last words shot into the very heart of Constance, and at once put an end to all her uncertainty as to his real purpose; though its effect upon her deprived her of her strength; her cheek became pale, her look fixed, and her whole figure motionless; so that she would have fallen, had not Mortimer caught her in his arms. The contact which this produced, resembling an embrace, necessary and involuntary as it was, brought her to herself, and the ineffable softness and innocence of the smile she gave him on recovering, spoke to him, in sweeter language than words could tell, all that his heart could wish.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN INTERRUPTION.

"My lord, here are letters for you."
"I cannot read them now." SHAKSPEARE.

THOSE who read this work as a *mere* love story (and we fear many will do so, though it is no more a love

story than is necessary to illustrate a theory,) will, perhaps, be disappointed at the abrupt conclusion of the last chapter. But the object of our theory being human nature, and our immediate work to analyze the heart and mind, under the influence of particular passions,—that done, we will not promise any of those inferior details, inferior in comparison with our *philosophical* object: though we are aware that these would, perhaps, be the most engaging parts of our history to many a young, and particularly many a fair reader.

We cannot tell, for we never even inquired, how many times De Vere kissed Lady Constance's hand, after they had come to this delicious understanding, so necessary, as well as so charming to them both. It is sufficient to say, that though it was at a time when Sir Charles Grandison was in the height of his reputation, De Vere did not confine himself to *bowing* upon it. Nor did Constance, on her part, though at least one whole, though imperceptible hour had flown away in this extraordinary dream (for so it appeared,) utter any fear that they might be thought to have been together too long, or that people would wonder at it, or that she was afraid that Lady Eleanor might be coming,—as many very prudent, very discreet, and very passionless young ladies, even after declaration, have sometimes been known to do. Defend me from such discretion! or such regard for time, as the mistress of a friend of mine once displayed, when, during one of his most passionate ebullitions, she asked him what o'clock it was.

Such a woman, in her softest moments (we will not give the whole quotation,) might indeed

> "Mark the figures of an Indian chest,
> "And while she sees her friend in deep despair,
> "Observe how much a chintz exceeds mohair."

But such a one was not Constance. No! with the frankest nature in the world, yet with a modesty all her own, she confessed the secret of her heart, now De Vere had really made her feel what it was, by so entire a disclosure of his own; which discovery, if the reader think it rather of the latest, we have nothing to say

against it. Be this as it will, Constance never in her life looked so lovely; for there is no cosmetic in the world, which is such a heightener of beauty, as that soft and virgin confession of affection, which comes but once, and comes no more.

This was felt by De Vere in every pulse of his heart. These were, indeed, heavenly moments; and so absorbing was the happiness, that every distant sound, and even every rustling leaf, made him tremble in the fear of interruption. He feared even his mother; though his heart was impatient to tell her what he knew it would be the best joy of hers to hear. He was therefore vexed, and as angry as such a moment would allow, to be sought out by a king's messenger whom he had known when in waiting on his uncle, and who now belonged to Mr. Wentworth.

The messenger had evidently made speed, and was ordered, he said, to deliver the packet of which he was the bearer, to no one but Mr. De Vere himself.

But love is above all the prime ministers in the world —in the world of Christendom, at least—for we will not swear that De Vere would have done at Constantinople as he did on this occasion, in remanding the messenger to the castle, and putting the letter into his pocket,—at the same time declaring, that nothing which man could write, could equal in value, the thousandth part of a minute of the felicity he was then enjoying.

Constance thanked him with her eyes, and with a pleased smile, which she neither could, nor meant to restrain; but, at length, contracting her fine features, which had expanded with happiness, into a look of prudence, she chided him for not examining his packet.

"How know you," said she, "that the fate of England may not depend upon it?"

"Dear Constance," replied De Vere, "if the fate of the world depended upon it, provided it left this dear spot in safety, I am afraid I should be selfish enough not to care so much for it, as I do for the interruption which it has given to the sweetest moment of my life."

Constance said no more about the packet, for, in

truth, this speech made her forget every thing but itself. But the agitation she had undergone, the vicissitudes of feeling which had shaken her, pleaded more powerfully with De Vere, than her injunctions. He felt, indeed, the necessity, for both their sakes, of giving a truce to the excitement which both had experienced; and, seeing that she showed evident signs of exhaustion, he himself proposed that they should return to the castle. "It will do us both good," said he, "to be alone."

"Me it certainly will," replied Constance, faintly, and she refused not his arm as he supported her home.

There, indeed, her heart expanded in a thankfulness and joy, which were unalloyed. But the joy was sedate, not exuberant. She reposed for a long time in her cabinet, without speaking a word. Her eye, indeed, pursued the windings of the Dove in the plain beneath, or rested upon the wood-crowned steeps of the distant hills. It darted "from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," and continued for many minutes to be thus occupied. And yet she could scarcely be said to be sensible of the landscapes she surveyed. Her mental eye was closed.

Happiness of mind, indeed, is always, what we have called her's, *sedate*. That which belongs to the spirits is of a more stirring kind. But heaven forefend that this last should ever be undervalued! Like Horatio's, it is often all that many a light-hearted wretch has "to feed and clothe him." But constance was too much occupied with the seeming wonders which had attended the last few short weeks, and the bountifulness which seemed still shed over her lot, to allow her feeling to evaporate in any violent expression of it. The character of her mind was cheerful, but modest propriety, and it showed itself here. Her first emotions were those of thankfulness; her next, of astonishment, that she should be still marked out for favour by heaven (for so it seemed,) without any merit of her own, without any claim to be thus distinguished.

"I have never even yet been tried," said she, "by

particular misfortune; and oh! if it does overtake me, eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial to my proportioned strength!"

She then indulged in reverie upon all that had befallen her; befallen her, she thought, so mysteriously. That she should have been so pursued by Lord Cleveland, and that he should have so strangely acquired the means, and consequent temptation, to invade her fortune; that, though he had failed, another should reap the benefit, and that other Mortimer—the man whose childhood had so impressed, whose manhood so charmed her; charmed her by all those graces of mind and manner so peculiarly delighting to *feminine propriety;* all this was astonishing! But when she added to this that the success of her cousin should have brought about what she now felt more home than ever, from his recent declarations, would never, without it, have been accomplished: this, this indeed seemed the immediate work of that kind and bounteous Providence which she had ever worshipped with feelings of gratitude and reverence.

To that Providence, therefore, she now poured out her soul in an unrestrained burst of thankfulness, which, as it did good to her full mind at the time, so would it to many a heart callous from prosperity, and now revelling in it with hard and thankless indifference.

Mortimer, on his part, though more active, was scarcely less rapt. With his packet still unopened, he tried to collect his scattered senses; but he only collected them by remembering and repeating many poetical effusions on the fascinations of women: particularly such passages as these—

> "Imagine something 'tween young men and angels,
> Fatally beauteous, having killing eyes;
> Their voices charm like nightingales;
> They are all enchantment: those who once behold
> Are made their slaves for ever."

It is certain, that if in this wild luxuriance of language, old Dryden painted women as something be-

tween young men and angels, Constance appeared to De Vere what was afterwards applied to the most fascinating of her time, the connecting link between angel and woman.*

After this he sought his mother, and delighted her matron heart with the tidings which he knew would be most precious to it. There was something peculiarly amiable in the tenderness of his attention to this venerable woman. Like mercy, it was twice blessed; for it blessed him that gave and her that received. His love for her was, indeed, all that could make a son's love acceptable, for it was compounded of the best sort of affection, added to the most entire reliance upon her judgment, and the highest admiration of her principle.

De Vere was, however, at last left alone with his packet; and what was his surprise to find, among other arrangements, communicated by Mr. Wentworth, a proposal that he should go into the House of Peers by the name of De Bolebec, Sandford, or any other old title held by former De Veres.

"That your birth would recommend it," said the letter, "now that your fortune is not unsuitable to your birth, no one will deny: and as our principles are, perhaps, not so popular among their Lordships as with the Commons, your support may be more efficacious there than where less wanted. This, I own, is my first motive: but very little behind it is the pleasure I have in making this offer to the friend of my esteem. On other accounts, too, it may not be ineligible, as we want you in place: and what Flowerdale told you is very true—for some offices you are too proud, for others at present, too humble. May I add, without offending you, that it may give a grace to what I know is the pursuit of your heart. I do not mean that it will ever weigh one feather with that noble Constance that you should be a peer: but it *may* be agreeable to *you* that you can make *her* a peeress."

There was a frank kindness in this offer, and still

* The first Mrs. Sheridan.

more in the mode of making it, which greatly affected De Vere; and when, in the evening, he laid it before those who, next to himself were most concerned, the concluding part drew tears from her who was so delicately mentioned. Oh, said De Vere, that all ministers knew how little beholden they are to artificial phraseology—how infinitely better served by the language of plain truth!

The proposal, however, was not one to be slighted, and it called for immediate answer, so immediate, that it only added to De Vere's embarrassment (for he was embarrassed) how to decide. His mother desired not to be even consulted. She was pleased at the mark of consideration shown him, and particularly pleased with the thought that the De Veres might once more rank in the peerage, which, said she, they once so adorned. She thought, too, with a sigh, of the extinction of the Mowbrays, and evidently felt elevated, from every family consideration, by the offer which had been made. "But no wish of mine," said she, "son Mortimer, shall, for it ought not to sway you. Decide as it seems best to your own views of right, and I am sure the decision will not, cannot be wrong."

So saying, she desired not to hear of the subject again till the answer had been returned; a resolution which was shared by the right judging Constance. "It would be to wrong you," said she, "to let a private wish, if I had one, influence what I know you will decide upon the grounds of propriety alone."

De Vere, congratulating himself on being so well supported by the persons he most loved in the world, said he would take the night for his counsellor.

The result was, that the next morning the offered honour was declined; but declined with gratitude, and on characteristic grounds. "Think me not," said he, "so falsely proud, so indiscriminately commonplace, as not to view the peerage as I ought. 'Tis a great and high order, and priviliged for the most useful, the most noble purposes; to hold the balance, as it often has, between too much liberty, and a too aspiring

prerogative. The country must ever be proud of its peers; and that man is silly or worthless, who disparages the order, and ridiculous who affects to disdain it. Had I been born to the peerage, therefore, proud should I have been. But to those who have to achieve the honour, 'tis a Temple of Fame, and must not be entered, except from desert. Let me merit a place in it, after service *performed*, and gladly will I accept it. To take it as a *retaining* fee for service *to be done*, accords not with my views of that freedom from all motive but *approbation*, which is, and alone will be, my reason for supporting you."

The messenger had long been despatched with this answer, before De Vere showed a copy of it to his mother and cousin.

"Had it been different," said Lady Eleanor, "I should have been not displeased; as it is, I am pleased and proud too."

Constance said little, but thought much. In truth, this spirit of independence was too like her own not to meet with all her approbation; while her admiration of the character of her cousin seemed raised higher and higher, and her heart only glowed more deeply at the thought of the soft ties by which such a man was about to be united to her for life.

We may suppose that the recent declaration was communicated on the instant to her guardians; and we may suppose, too, that no cloud arose from their quarter to cast a gloom over her felicity. London, as well as Castle Mowbray, were therefore occupied with a history which had all the air of a romance; but it was a romance pleasing to all who had any room in their hearts for the pleasure of real sentiment, or the admiration of a noble nature. Lord Cleveland, indeed, attempted to ridicule it, by calling it a childish legend, in which De Vere was the knight, Constance the oppressed damsel, and himself the giant. But he could get no one to join in the ridicule; on the contrary, he often heard the story mentioned with allusions too little favourable to his self-love to make him happy. But of him hereafter.

And indeed, except Cleveland, we have little more to say of any of the personages of our history. That history being nearly concluded, so are the lessons which we wished to inculcate, drawn from the examples with which we have been busy; for all lessons of moral instruction are over, when the passions are quieted, and struggle is no more.

We fear, therefore, it will be our lot to disappoint many of our readers, who may fondly expect that, after the example of our great predecessors, we have to present a glowing description of a marriage, surpassing all marriages that ever went before. But this is neither our purpose, nor our taste. Our subject has been the human heart. We have, therefore, no train of coaches to describe; no anxious bridesmaids, hoping that it will be their turn next; no superb dresses, no maiden's strewing flowers, not even a band of music, a dance for the tenants, or a feast for the poor.

True, all these were here; but our business is, we trust, of a higher nature than to describe them. We may relate, indeed, the pleasure of the excellent Herbert, in performing the ceremony; of Wentworth and Harclai, in attending it; of the marquess, who gave away the bride; and of Lady Eleanor, and Lady Clanellan, who blessed her with tears of joy, of pride, and approbation. But with no more will we trust ourselves.

There are, however, two or three particulars which we wish still to record, in regard to public affairs. The aspect of these was so changed for the better, and public men grew so altered in character, that De Vere delighted to mix among them, and to own to the good and observing Herbert, that *his* view of mankind, even of the political part of it, might be the true one. In fact, unblushing self-interest was no longer the order of the day. Under the auspices of Wentworth, and the virtue of the sovereign, high and aspiring spirits started up of a different cast from those which had disgraced preceding years, and gentlemen became ashamed of not being gentlemen in public, as well as in private life. The little, low, trading politician, if not annihilated,

was at least discouraged, and became comparatively contemptible. Men served themselves indeed, but in a way to show that to serve one's self, is perfectly compatible with sincerity in serving the state. Hence, De Vere acknowledged the soundness of Herbert's exposition, that this was no more than in unison with the general intentions of the Author of Nature, who has expressly contrived to make the consideration of self, when properly regulated, a most efficacious mean of promoting universal good. De Vere, therefore, in time, was cured of the spleen, which we own some particular examples of hypocrisy and depravity near him, had created. He admitted that public life, as he now saw it pursued, both by ministers and opposition, was full of as virtuous interest as any thing in private, while it was a great deal more honourable, from the talents and sacrifice of personal ease, which it demanded. His fortune, indeed, and his happiness with that spotless Constance, made him continue to resist Wentworth's persuasions as to office; but he became active in parliamentary support and attendance, and headed a considerable band of great country gentlemen, who, agreeing to act in a body, became of immense weight and consequence in all general questions upon the public weal. In these, De Vere's good sense, as well as his independence, had full room to show themselves; and Wentworth was not more delighted with him as a friend, than proud of him as one of the best supports of his government.

And here we should close, but that, in justice to that superior minded Wentworth (superior for the genuine elevation of his heart, as well as his unequalled talents,) it is only right to state a little more in detail, what in fact wrought wonders for him with the nation, and yet was the only and simple secret of his government. And with this detail, we finish our labours.

CHAPTER XXXII.

POETICAL JUSTICE.

But I'll report it
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles;
Where great patricians shall attend and shrug;
I the end admire.

SHAKSPEARE.

My dear, dear lord,
The purest treasure mortal times afford,
Is spotless reputation.

SHAKSPEARE.

ALL eyes were turned upon the opening of Mr. Wentworth's administration. The question of the dissolution of parliament, had not been determined, and his opponents hoped that it would be determined in the negative. They knew that their only chance of making a great demonstration, was while they continued to be composed of so many friends of the old ministry.

Mr. Wentworth knew this too, and he was instigated to dissolve by many of his supporters who still retained some of the maxims of the old school. But he had an ambition of his own, which was to try (having proclaimed his principles) what stand he could make against his opponents, with all the advantages they retained from having been in power when the parliament was chosen. For this he was blamed by some, and sneered at by many. Lord Oldcastle's adherents talked and looked big. "We shall see," said they, "what this visionary, this patriot minister, will be able to do with his new notions of public virtue, which we know, whatever it may do elsewhere, cannot exist in the cabinet of a statesman." But Lord Oldcastle, and his adherents, unfortunately for themselves, had formed their notions of the world upon such maxims as those of Halifax, Bolingbroke, and Chesterfield; able men, but whose principles concerning mankind were but little reverenced by Wentworth: and, thank Heaven have

been demonstrated to be false, by the purer practice of succeeding years. A public man is now, as we have observed, ashamed of dishonesty, in word or deed, and, in particular, would be ashamed of that maxim of Halifax which holds, that it is only the fools and knaves in it, who compose the world; "for that the few who have sense, or honesty, *sneak* up and down singly, but never go in herds."

The first act of Wentworth greatly confounded his opponents. A preceding minister had, upon a case (whether with or without real claim,) rewarded one of his friends with an immense pension. The grant was for life, and could not be reviewed. Within a week after Wentworth's appointment, a sinecure place to an equal amount fell in. He was instantly besieged by a host of applicants, some of them of the first families and consequence in the kingdom. He refused them all, and appointed the great pensioner to the place; thus saving the pension to the nation.

The party of opposition were at first aghast at this proof of sincerity in Wentworth's principles: and, when they recovered, had nothing left but to sneer, and to ridicule. It, however, made a great impression upon many members, and upon the nation at large.

A considerable question then approached; and a member not greatly respected, but one who from his own means influenced two votes, applied urgently and perseveringly for a particular church preferment for his brother. Whether the application might have been listened to, may be a question; but hints were given, mildly, though intelligibly, that if complied with, the votes might be fixed for government on the impending question; leaving the alternative to be divined as it might. Mr. Wentworth suspended his answer till the claims of the party were compared with some others. The question came on; division was called for, and while the opposition were going out, the member who had applied, came close to the minister, and whispering in his ear, "Sir," said he, "I now ask you for the last time, whether you mean to grant my request or not?"

"Certainly not," cried Wentworth, with emphasis; and the member immediately went out. At that moment two votes were lost to government by this; but the story being told, six were afterward gained.

But what Wentworth's opponents most sneered at, and what some even of his friends were disposed to blame, was his conduct to several dependants in his own office, who asked leave of absence to attend a contested election. It was signified to him that they were in the interest of the opposing candidate, whose favour had placed them where they were. "I respect their motives," said he, "and will not let them be restrained."

During all this time, Lord Cleveland, though he hated Wentworth, and wished to revenge himself on the king, actually stood aloof, and formed his troops into an army of observation. In this he was actuated by two motives, resentment against Lord Oldcastle; and a desire which his disgusts at home had made him feel, to pass some time in splendour abroad. He therefore caused it to be signified to Mr. Wentworth, that if the embassy to a great first-rate power were offered him he would accept it, and meantime he might count upon his parliamentary support. A nobleman of high character, but of little more party consequence than that character gave him, had already been selected, and Wentworth's answer was strait forward that it was engaged.

Lord Cleveland returned, that he knew his support was of ten times more consequence than that of the nobleman in question, and that Wentworth had better consider of it.

The *visionary* minister replied that he *had* considered of it, and could not break his word. Lord Cleveland's whole force immediately moved over to the ranks of opposition. The loss, however, was more than compensated; for Wentworth, to whom the proposal had been made in any thing but confidence, and who received a mandate, rather than been consulted, showed him up to the House, and through the House to the country.

"As I have no pride," said he, "in such support, so I value it not, and count not upon its advantages. What is made a matter of bargain, may at any time be had; but my object is the real approbation of my country, not the hollow alliance of mendicant self-interest."

The satisfaction which all this consistency between principle and practice, gave to De Vere, may be conceived. His old notions of public men, as we have said, gave way, and his feelings were fully participated by the country. Addresses poured in from many quarters on the change of ministry; the ranks of opposition, notwithstanding Cleveland's accession, became thinner and thinner, and then, and not till then, did the patriot minister determine upon dissolving the parliament.

The contest was great, but glorious for *him*. His superiority was felt every where, except in the immediate strong holds of his opponents, and even there he sometimes met with unexpected victory. Lord Cleveland, in particular, felt the shock; for, to the honour of the English character, let it be recorded, that when his late private conduct in the lawsuit, and his late public conduct respecting the embassy, were known, and all their details minutely developed, parties were formed in opposition to him whenever there was the least opening for public opinion to express itself. The bold disclosures of the minister of the real reasons of his opposition, told fearfully against him; and, as much of his borough influence had been personal, he lost nearly one half of his strength. It maddened him with rage, and he gave almost every body to the devil. He felt that the principle on which he had sometimes piqued himself, of despising the opinion of the world, could only hold when it depended upon superior virtue, not upon superior pride; yet he determined, if he could, to *brave* the world.

And for a time he *did* brave it; and for a time, whatever his unhappiness within, his outward intrepidity was at its height.

Instead of flying, he every where courted notice. He was in every circle, at every place of amusement, at-

tended every debate in both Houses; and, in the peers, affected to talk much to the chancellor who had so discomfited him, and by whom it was remarked, that nothing but his character could keep down his parts, and nothing but his parts support him under his character. The actual presence at court was the only place which he avoided; but he was often seen on levee days at the palace-gate, kissing his hand to his acquaintance as they went in; nay, sometimes going in with them, in his undress, and stopping only short of the presence chamber itself. To explain this, he gave out, and thought it was believed, that he disdained going farther, because he had quarrelled with the king.

It is certain he at first relaxed nothing in his brilliancy of life; and if any thing could justify this, it would have been the subserviency which he seemed to meet with from many men and many women of the world. His table was never better served, and his guests never less numerous, nor of less quality. Poets and artists tendered him their works; his equipages were still the most showy in London; his water parties still the most gay on the Thames, and his authority still much deferred to at the clubs. All this was blazoned forth daily by the public press, and no one thought of questioning (or at least showed him that they questioned) the morality or honour of his conduct towards the minister or Lady Constance. No one blamed (or showed him that they blamed) him for offering to sell his political support, or for tampering with a highwayman for the means of acquiring wealth; though all now agreed that there had been neither justice, honour, nor common sense in the claim which had been defeated.

There was but one man not actually ranged against him in party hostility, who visited him outwardly with the reprobation he felt within; and that man was his sovereign. Such is the power which the trappings of the world too often possess, to cover, for a while, the defects and rottenness beneath them.

But was Lord Cleveland unpunished even in this world? Was he really, during all this time, the gay minion he affected to be? Let no one think so. He

carried that about him, and within him, which the slaves (I think them no other,) who honoured, or rather who did not dishonour him with their lips, would not have endured for all his splendour. A corroding self-blame was eating deeper and deeper into his heart. A canker had withered every hope of his life. To him, indeed, hope had been what it has been called, "though the miserable man's good, the presumptuous man's *devil*." It is certain that, like the fiend of evil, it had had "power to assume a pleasing shape," and abused him to damn him. In short, every pursuit that depended upon himself had failed, and all the rest, he knew, belonged only to his titles, his wealth, and his magnificence, when he would have given half his fortune that they should have belonged to his person, his character, and his virtues.

All this he knew, for he had too much penetration to be deceived. He knew that in reality he was hated by most; despised by many; beloved of none. Yet he had the misery of being peculiarly alive to these considerations. Thus, like Macbeth, he saw that he received nothing but—

> "Mouth-honour, breath
> Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not."

And this continued, till, like the same tyrant, he felt that his May of life had fallen into

> "The sear and yellow leaf,
> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> He must not look to have."

This made him wretched, and the longer he lived the more sullen and morose he became, till his high blown pride at length broke under him. He then altered his whole style of living, extinguished the brilliancy of his house, lost all taste for elegance, and ceased to feel the excitements of society. It was then that he felt the exact estimation in which he had been held; for his associates fell off; the world, even the profligate world no longer admired; and, amidst the throng of his votaries, he lived in solitude.

Avarice was now the only passion left him—what joy that brings, we know. Childless, wifeless, and without a friend, he had none of those soft and amiable consolations on which advancing age reposes, making its calmness equal in enjoyment to the activity of youth. On the contrary, his disappointed heart plunged deep into misanthropy for a cure, and every instance of happiness, success, or honour, acquired by others, carried torture to himself.

As he advanced in years, he was still farther afflicted; for the total misuse of his life *here* began to give him unhappy forebodings of what might be to come. To remedy, therefore, this, he endeavoured to confirm his only half pondered scepticism, and take refuge in infidelity. But he failed even in this.

The consequence to his mental peace may be imagined. Under all outward appearances, therefore, let no one think, notwithstanding the splendid gifts with which Providence had tried Lord Cleveland, that even in this world the abuse of them was left unpunished.

Contrast this with De Vere, with Constance, with Wentworth, and with Lord and Lady Clanellan; and think (for you safely may,) that though every thing about us shows this life to be meant for a state of trial, not of unmixed happiness, still that the good preponderates over the evil. There is nothing, indeed, that has been related in these pages which does not prove that an honourable mind and a virtuous heart may even here achieve some portion of that happiness which is ultimately designed for them.

With this feeling, and the comfort that belongs to it, reader, I bid thee farewell.

THE END.

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